

# Online Parent Support - Companion Guide Vol. 2

Questions & Answers





To Parents with Out-of-Control Children and Teens



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# It just breaks my heart that he won't open up...

Monday, June 23, 2008

Just wondered if you have any ideas about this. Our 17 year old son, D\_\_\_, is silent about things that bother him. He won't say anything about what is going on inside of him. He just got back from a week at church camp. Last year he came back all fired-up and ready to face life. This year he came back no different than he left. Only thing different is he is making an effort to get a normal sleeping pattern. He was staying up till like 4 AM, then sleeping to about 2 PM. So far he has been going to bed at around 12 or 1, and getting up at around 10 or so. He still has no job either. I don't know what he is interested in other than computer gaming and youth group on Tuesday nights. He doesn't hang out with friends much though. He does talk to them a lot on the phone and text, of course.

Maybe a little background will help. First off, we home school. Have done this since D\_\_\_ was in the 5th grade. We are from Illinois but moved to Kentucky 4 years ago. He was very upset with this. Our other son will be 13 next month and didn't want to move either. We got thru it but these 4 years have been the toughest I have ever faced. Also, our boys are adopted. They are half-brothers (have different fathers). We have had D\_\_\_ since he was 3, and Jared since birth.

Is there any way we can help D\_\_\_ open up? I never degrade my boys or anything like that. I don't know why he won't talk. And he says he don't and won't talk to anyone else about it either. He has always been the quiet type.

One other thing. A year or so ago I read a post on his MySpace where he mentioned that he came close to committing suicide once. He had the knife out and everything and then his cell phone rang. It was a girl he cared much about and that stopped him. I spoke with him about it later. He said it happened not long after we moved here. I asked him if he had looked back and realized all he would have missed if he had gone thru with it. He said yes and "That would have sucked!" So that is a plus. I told him that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. I encouraged him that when things got rough he needed to get with someone and talk it out. If not me then find someone else he could trust and confide in. Just talk it out. I assured him that I loved him very much and that I would never laugh at him about anything he had to say. I know the story he came up with could be fabricated just for MySpace but D\_\_\_ isn't really like that. He almost always tells the truth and when he doesn't he eventually gets around to it (usually soon).

It just breaks my heart that he won't open up. And at times I get a bit fearful when he is depressed but yet won't talk. He has something against me. I tried to find out what it is but he won't say. And I don't know if he would go with me to see a counselor if that is needed.

He is a really good kid. Both of them are. But teens are so hard to figure out. I don't remember ever being like this myself.

Anyway, would appreciate any comments you might have.

.....

Hi D.,

We could spend the rest of the afternoon trying to figure out why your son is in a shell. His behavior is multi-factorial (e.g., his genetic make-up, his personality make-up, environmental factors, etc.).

The bottom line is that he will grow out of this -- and there isn't much you can do in the meantime (other than to simply reassure him that he is loved).

Don't take this behavior personally.

Mark

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 04:36AM (-07:00)

## I'm feeling more detached from him each day...

Monday, June 23, 2008

Hi Mark,

Our son, I\_\_, will be 18 next Sunday and will be a high school senior this coming August. I began your program about 10 days ago and have completed the first week. I talked with I\_\_ about our mistakes as parents, we did have dinner together last Sunday and I have attempted to complete the other first week assignments. I have not moved on to week two though because I\_\_ has been gone so much that I have not been able to do the number of repetitions that I'm sure are part of the program. Since school has been out, I\_\_ comes home late (midnight to 1) during the week and later during the weekends. He gets up after I go to work and is gone before I get home from work. There are some days that I never see him. This weekend we asked him to come home by 4 on Saturday and we have not seen him or heard from him since yesterday afternoon. He does not have a job and while he says he is looking for one, I don't believe he is looking very hard. He spends his days "hanging" with his friends. There is not much to take away from him. He no longer has access to a computer (at home), has lost his phone (and the service is turned off) and does have use of a car, which is at home because he has no money for gas.

I would very much like to re-establish a relationship with him so he can live at home while he finishes high school. I'm feeling more detached from him each day and I'm sure he is feeling detached from us as well. He stills calls occasionally to check in. What would you advise as next steps? Also, in Indiana, are all parental rights/responsibilities termed at 18, or do some continue if the student is still in high school?

Appreciate your feedback and suggestions,

C.

.....

Hi C.,

First of all, to allow him to run ...to come and go as he pleases ...is a form of over-indulgence. In Session #2 and #3, you'll find disciplinary strategies to deal with this



problem. He needs to be in by curfew – and he needs to be doing some chores around the house (especially since he's not working).

Re: parental responsibilities. If one of the parents is paying child support, he or she may have to help with college expenses until the adult-child is 21, but other than that, your obligations are met once he reaches the 18.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 04:50AM (-07:00)

## He and his group of friends are starting to drink alcohol...

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Hi M.,

**I've responded throughout your email below:**

Mark,

First of all, thank you for your program. I am beginning session 3 and so far, I've seen some good changes between my 16 year old son and myself. We don't argue nearly as much as we use to. Sometimes I have to catch myself but for the most part, it is getting better. I was definitely the over indulgent parent and am trying to fix my mistakes. I am also a single mom.

My problem with my son is that I believe he and his group of friends are starting to drink alcohol. What is the best way to handle this problem.

**==> Please refer to the "Read These Emails From Exasperated Parents" [session #4 - online version]. You will be using "The Six-Step Approach" that is also discussed in session #4.**

I've also noticed that his group of friends are changing. Some of the new guys in the group are ones that he has told me that are known drinkers. I am probably a bad person for doing this, but I have read his text messages where some of his friends have talked about getting alcohol or have been drinking themselves and I always check his room or outside where they sometimes camp out to see if there are any cans or bottles. I'm not naive to think that he's never tried drinking but I don't want him to start a bad habit if he hasn't already. If I do catch him drinking or intoxicated what should I do?

**==> Again, refer to the areas of the eBook listed above.**

My brother who is a probation officer in a different county told me about how a school sold alcohol breath testing things (sorry not sure of the official name) and said he could possibly get me one. I have not talked to my brother about my son's possible drinking.

**==> Homebreathalyzers are great if your son comes home visibly under the influence or smells of alcohol - and he agrees to the test. But he will not likely submit to testing since you don't have the authority to jail him if he refuses. Also, one shot of whiskey - or a 12 ounce beer - or a 7 ounce glass of wine metabolizes in just one hour, and a breathalyzer test will not detect any alcohol. So you would have to test him fairly quickly. Mark**

[www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com](http://www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com)

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:29AM (-07:00)

## Stepfathers are often viewed as "second-class citizens"...

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Hi Mark... Thanks for the link worked perfectly...with regard the first set of assignments i am struggling a fair bit mentally with applying the Love one.. My Husband is L\_\_\_\_'s step father and has struggled with her a great deal from the start of our 8year marriage but more especially the last two years, she is 16... she has HUGE issues around him and for him to start saying he loved her EVERY nite would seem almost mission impossible, from him and she would find it very odd to say the least...even I am finding the whole thing confronting but can give it a good shot... I noticed on the side column of that page u said that it was OK to not say it every nite... What do you think...?? I am assuming that D\_\_\_\_ needs to implement all the approaches just as much as I do for the picture to change??

Thanks So much...

Regards B.

.....

Hi B.,

Unfortunately, stepfathers are often viewed as "second-class citizens" in the eyes of many stepchildren.

The statement "I love you daughter" will have more meaning coming from you rather than her stepfather. However, D\_\_\_\_ could occasionally offer a sincere compliment to your daughter that will have a near-equal effect.

In any event, I think it will be O.K. for your husband not to say "I love you" if it will seem awkward and out-of-character for him.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:30AM (-07:00)

## ODD vs. PD

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

What is the difference between Oppositional Defiant Disorder and a Personality Disorder?

Mark Hutten, M.A.

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:35AM (-07:00)

## He tries to control & dominate his family, peers and school sta...

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Dear Mark, for the past couple of years I have been working with JR, as i will refer to him for reasons of confidentiality. I am after some advice as the child is facing exclusion from school due to a catalogue of offences against his peers and staff. He is following dinosaur school programme run by our behaviour services. He can, although he is only 6yrs of age, tell you about all the solutions, problem solving techniques he has learned, although refuses to put into practice. He tries to control & dominate his family, peers and school staff. A simple outing can be a nightmare, he will stop dead in his tracks and hold every-one up refusing to board the bus etc I have tried traffic lights, smiley face book, etc. the list is endless. I have given him instructions to work, if he refuses he gets count of three, instructions repeated then behaviour ignored, this seems to work and he is very bright and has amazing concentration levels and an excellent work rate, but the overwhelming desire to be 'first' to do anything, from line up which i have stopped him doing because he pushes people out of the way, to trying to beat every-one at all cost at snakes & ladders. I play football & shoot baskets with him using a small group of kids who are still willing to play with us. His humour is rude, anything to do with poop, butts, burps gross table manners, which he also has, he finds funny he loves to see a look of disgust as he eats nose contents in front of staff. Time out given he says 'don't care'. we try to reason with him he says 'blah blah. Missed play' time says not bothered, does his time without remorse. I seem to be his only friend, i tried to buddy him up with another bright little boy but he tried to dominate him and stabbed him in the hand with a pencil, needless to say we abandoned that strategy. It is so frustrating as he is so bright and could be a real little star but he just cannot seem to cope with school life, we tried one to one in the after school club but it was too intense as i had to be that step ahead of him all day long avoiding total domination at all times! Any advice on this matter would be truly welcome.

your sincerely, Jane, warn-out support worker!!

.....

These behavior problems could be the result of many different factors (e.g., genetic & environmental). At first glance, you described a child who (a) is on the receiving end of

poor/negative parenting (e.g., a parent who is extremely critical and judgmental), and (b) has Oppositional Defiant Disorder and ADHD.

Has he had a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation yet? If not, this would be an important first step. (I would do some testing to rule out Bipolar Disorder.)

My experience with these children (i.e., children with severely disruptive behavior patterns) is that they eventually misbehave to the point where the parent has to place them in a residential treatment facility for a period of a year or more. Sometimes the best thing for these kids is to be away from their parents for awhile.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:59AM (-07:00)

## I feel like I am in the middle of a Tornado...

Thursday, June 26, 2008

Hi B.,

**== > I've responded throughout your email below:**

Hi Mark

Thanks for the quick response to my queries..I am now having a few more... I told L\_\_\_ that I realised I had made mistakes etc this morning and she flew off the handle so aggressively telling me that I couldn't change things now and that she would not change no matter what etc etc..

**== > This is to be expected.**

I managed to remain relatively calm, at least externally but on the inside i left the room and proceeded over the next hour to experience a pretty intense emotional meltdown... it felt like a combination of guilt for the past, pain and anger at having such a difficult child and fear that it was all too much and that things were never going to change... I am thinking that perhaps it is quite natural to feel a deep emotional reaction to all this shift..??

**== > That's correct. People don't like change, because change gets them out of their comfort zone. Plus it takes a lot of energy to adjust to new things.**

I want to know if I am supposed to TELL her that she is going to have to EARN everything from now on or do I just implement the strategies without explaining exactly WHAT and WHY we are doing life like this now...

**== > This was discussed in Session #2 Assignments. What you say is, "I want to try compromising this week." Be sure to watch Instructional Video #18.**

Also our situation is made complex by a few practical factors..they are:

...we have a shop business that D\_\_\_ and I run that is 45 mins from home...we travel

there each day but sometimes one of us is at home ( we have two smaller children who go to school) ..Many, in fact most weekends we are staying down at the shop as it is just easier that way and we take the two small children with us but for the past 6 months or more we have been leaving L\_\_\_ at home due to the extreme amount of tension with her and her wanting to be with her friends etc... she has proven to be reliable and responsible in the sense that she respects the home and does not throw parties and she maintains jobs like caring for animals and garden when asked etc whilst we are away...BUT she has as a result experienced a lot of trust from me and a lot of freedom...she has not broken my trust, she is not one of those really wild kids with NO respect at all for others etc but I can certainly see the symptoms of the ODD character in her and the disregard she shows for myself and D\_\_\_ and the family system in general is VERY DISTURBING... she lacks any real motivation and has left school and is not doing anything about getting a job etc..

So basically the situation is very uncomfortable and I am unsure about how I am going to fully implement the new boundaries etc when we have to attend to the needs of the business and to hers when we stay away from the home base for periods of time.. We are just about to move shop premises starting July 1st and so we will be staying down there with the small children from tomorrow for three weeks of the school holidays to get the job done...I have told her already the other day that I am not happy for her to be at home unsupervised for long periods and that she will have to come and stay with us for at least Mon-thurs and that she can be up the hill at home on the weekends to see her friends etc...She of course balked at that but has not yet refused as I have yet to implement it...Now I am confused about whether I should be allowing her any freedom to be with her friends AT All, due to the Self-reliance strategy program or should I be waiting to implement ANYTHING you teach until I have nothing else major going on in my life

**== > We want our kids to have as much freedom as possible – HOWEVER – this freedom MUST be earned. “Freedom” does not contribute to the behavior problems. “Unearned freedom” does, though. Allow her to continue to have the freedom to be with her friends, but come up with something simple for her to do to earn that privilege.**

... I thought I recalled reading somewhere that we should not undertake ANY major endeavour whilst going thru this program..???

**== > Yes ...do not fix anything that is not broken. If your daughter is living up to your trust, then do not change anything in that particular area.**

I feel like I am in the middle of a Tornado and very overwhelmed with all that is on my plate so I will await your reply...

PS..You are absolutely sure that these strategies work...???. stupid question...she feels so irretrievable now...at times I feel like it's just too late..

**==> Doubting yourself is normal. I track outcomes with this program, and approximately 92% of parents report that (a) problems have reduced in frequency and severity and (b) the few remaining problems are manageable. So it doesn't work 100% of the time – and it doesn't wipe out ALL behavior problems. But the overall success rate is very good.**

Mark

P.S. Be sure to watch ALL the Instructional Videos.

## My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:28AM (-07:00)

### Give him a call ...see if he can help you.....

Thursday, June 26, 2008

I am seriously going to sign up for your online course, however I have a question> My two teenage kids are always around me. Will it be bad to do this in front of them because I was listening to one of your demo speech and they had comments about it ...said oh yeah mom, give him a call ...see if he can help you. My answer was I intend to something has to help. I need your opinion on this. I rarely have moments without them around. Thank you and I am hopeful with you and prayer. Something good has to come out of it. Thanks again, J.

.....

Hi J.,

It would be best that your children not see or hear what you will be doing -- otherwise it will be like showing them your poker hand in a game of poker.

My suggestion is to get a set of headphones that plug into your computer so that when you are watching the Instructional Videos, your kids can't hear the audio.

Also, you can print out a hard copy of the eBook and keep it out of sight.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:01AM (-07:00)

### Has she earned the CD or is it a bit of a free handout...

Friday, June 27, 2008

Hi Mark!

Just a question about rewards-the school counsellor started A\_\_\_ on a star chart a few weeks ago (before we joined OPS) and I was wondering what to do about it. We've sort of kept it going-she gets a star for good behavior and there is a list of rewards after each 10 stars (ie) a friend to play after 10stars, dinner out after 20, a new CD after 50 etc etc...We are up to 50 stars now after giving her a star for going to bed without a fuss and not getting up a million times-she has done this all week and she got a star last night. But she wants a new CD and is taking the list of rewards as gospel-I can't seem to change them around. So, has she earned the CD or is it a bit of a free handout or should we phase out the chart? Just not sure of what to do....

Generally her behavior this week isn't as bad as the last few weeks and we feel we are making a tiny bit of progress every now and again so thanks

Regards,

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Re: So, has she earned the CD or is it a bit of a free handout or should we phase out the chart?

We typically don't reward "good behavior" with extra stuff and freedom, rather we simply give acknowledgment and praise. But...

We also do not want to fix things that are not broken. Thus, if this system is working, I wouldn't change it.

When you are undecided about what course to take, ask yourself, "Will this promote the development of self-reliance in my child -- or will it inhibit such development?"

If it will likely foster the development of self-reliance, then it is a good course of action to take. Otherwise, you should re-evaluate.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:53AM (-07:00)

## Franco is now rebelling because he feels he is being punished...

Saturday, June 28, 2008

My two stepsons share a basement bedroom. Franco, the 17 year old, takes on the hero role and rarely breaks rules. Anthony, the 15 year old, takes on the scapegoat role and is constantly breaking rules. We grounded Anthony and took away cable TV in the basement. Franco is now rebelling because he feels he is being punished. What should we do?

==> Ground Anthony FROM the basement. In other words, have him stay IN the house, but OUT of the basement (except to sleep at night in his bed).

Franco feels sorry for Anthony when we ground him and has encouraged and helped his brother to get out of the house. Should Franco be disciplined for that? If so how?

==> Yes. Use the 1- to 3-day-discipline outlined in Session #3 entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid."

My stepsons' mother often finds excuses to take Anthony when we ground him because she feels sorry for him. Should we restart his grounding when he comes back?

==> No. But he should not be able to leave to be with his biological mother until he has completed the 1- to 3-day discipline. If his mother refuses to go along with this plan, then – yes – you restart the grounding when he returns.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 03:55AM (-07:00)

## I feel abandoned by my husband and am embarrassed by my son's behav...

Sunday, June 29, 2008

Hi T.,

**== > I've responded throughout your email below:**

Mark:

Thank you so much for the MOOCT website. Our son is 15 and we love him to bits - he is incredible, and he drives us crazy. Most of what we've found at your site is not news to us, but it's an organized and concrete approach that gives us tools, not idealisms. I am especially grateful for the dialogue you give us to repeat over and over; so much easier to not say the wrong things when we have a script to follow!

The Kid is just starting on High Risk diversion (county program) for multiple unruly filings and escalating behavior over the past 9 months. No drugs (multiple clean tests), no physical violence, worst "community" crimes are curfew violations (regularly) and a couple of fights (rarely - last >1 year ago). Our major problems with him have been school (passed all classes this semester, at last, but with HUGE support from the school), outright refusal to follow house rules/parental edicts, and "loud and hurtful language" coupled with intimidating behavior (punching walls, slamming doors, blocking path) at the most minor of provocations (ie, the word "No.") In the past eight weeks he's progressed to staying out all night or two, (three occasions). And has stolen money from my husband's car the first two times (~5 bucks or so each time).

== > Here you would want to use the strategy entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" – Session #3.

This is new behavior around our house; odd as it might sound, he has attempted to respect *\*some\** boundaries to this point. I should say, too, that this is an intelligent and socially well-developed kid that most people mistake for a better-educated young person several years older than he really is. Which means his behavior is willful, and more frustrating.

So we're several weeks past Week 4, and my husband and I are doing *\*fairly\** well. Our



son's fuse has gotten shorter; we give the simple "no" and single explanation and off he goes. He usually doesn't even try to negotiate now; just screams some predictable vulgarities as he proceeds to do whatever he wanted to do in the first place. The most recent occasion, yesterday, came after a week of few conflicts and general cooperation with no huge infractions. He had asked Thursday if he could "spend the night anywhere" on Friday and was told no by both parents. Friday, he left while we were at work and called late to ask again if he could spend the night at someone's house, and I told him no. When he (inevitably) raged about how it's not fair and he never gets to blah blah blah, I remembered my rules and told him I wasn't going to argue with him, and that I expected him home by 11pm (legal curfew). He swore again and hung up on me.

He did not come home.

**== > Give him a warning in addition to telling him that you expect him to be home by 11:00 PM. *"If you choose to ignore your curfew, you'll choose the consequence. The police will be called. A runaway report will be filed. And I will go to Juvenile Probation and file an incorrigibility complaint."***

When I finally tracked him down today, he insisted that he thought I had reversed my decision during his self-pity party. Let me stress, here: This has *\*never\** happened. And I sure didn't leave any room for misunderstanding last night. I followed the rules to the letter and did not engage in ANY discussion or back-and-forth. Also, he refused to tell me where he was and didn't come home for another five hours.

It seems to me that now he's lost the ability to get us riled up to give him an excuse to take off, he's desperate and turning to sheer invention. Does that seem correct?

**== > Yes. We expect this to happen because the child's *ability-to-control-parents* is waning.**

Right now, of course, he's furious and hostile because I "got the police involved", and they actually called one of his friends this time to see if they could find him. I "got the police involved" the other times, too, but this is the first time they've actively tried to track him down. (Slow weekend here in suburbia, apparently.)

**== > Good for you. You're on track here.**

I have three problems with this situation.

First is making sure that the way I'm handling this is correct. Although a part of me is touched by the kid's plea of ignorance, the rest of me remembers that forgetting and being confused and doing things poorly is how kids like this one show rebellion. So I've told him he'll be grounded from all privileges for three days, and that the clock starts ticking when he stops being hostile and stays where he's supposed to be. Is that appropriate?

**== > Yes ...but, be more specific. "Stop being hostile" is too vague. Plus you did not give a time limit.**

Say, for example, "When you stop yelling profanities, the clock will start."

Second is that my husband, when he gets back home tomorrow from his weekend

getaway, will ask me ad nauseum to "let it go" and not punish him. Or punish him for only one day. And let him have his computer. He will "reward" the kid during the grounding period with computer time and money and treats from the store and friends at the house "for just a little while" and etc. He will do this, even though he says he is fully on board with the MOOCT program. How should I handle this?

== > He may be on board in word, but not in action. Having said this, a weaker plan supported by both parents is much better than a stronger plan supported by only one.

Remember your successes. During your marriage, you and your husband have undoubtedly successfully negotiated many situations-with each of you both giving and taking a little until you reached some middle ground. You can also be successful at ending arguments in front of the children if you really want to. It won't be easy, but it will be rewarding.

Agree on a signal to alert both of you that the conversation is, or is about to, get too heated and needs to be halted. Make a commitment to honor and act on the signal. You might walk away and have an agreed-upon cooling off period. Or set a time to revisit your differences in opinion. Or write down what you're feeling and later share it with your husband, who might better understand where you're coming from.

Create your own family "rulebook." Write clear, reasonable, attainable rules (for both parents and kids) about what behavior is acceptable and what isn't. Your family, like a baseball team, will be more successful when you have clear guidelines.

Don't go overboard in trying to avoid arguments. Having small squabbles in front of the kids-and then resolving them peacefully-can actually be good for them; it shows that it's possible to disagree with someone you love, and that relationships don't end just because people are quarreling with each other.

Third is that I feel abandoned by my husband and am embarrassed by my son's behavior; when the police officer visited our house this evening to confirm that son was safe and sound, he was very rude to the officer. I apologized to the policeman, but can't help feeling guilty that they have to take time out from protecting our city to be subjected to such rude behavior. I know it's part of their job, but it's so unpleasant. I am ashamed of our home situation. Is it normal to feel this way?

== > Yes.

Re: husband. I'm guessing that at some level you feel as though you are "parenting" two children sometimes – your son and your husband. Plus it appears that your husband wants to remain "the good guy" in your son's eyes.

Re: son. You need not be embarrassed by your son's behavior. Remind yourself that he is just a kid who has a lot to learn – not a bad person with evil intentions.

Just keep doing what you're doing, because you are really on track as far as I can tell! Don't ignore your successes – and I'm sure there are many.

Thank you in advance for your input. I'm sorry this email is so long, and I appreciate your taking the time to respond to us floundering parents with your expertise and experience.

Sincerely,

T.

== > You're very welcome. It was good to hear from you. Email again in the future if you need some support.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:47AM (-07:00)

## So when do you use any particular strategy outlined in the eBook?

Tuesday, July 01, 2008

We want to use Fair Fighting (session #1) for smaller problems or with children who fall into the "not-so-strong-willed" category (i.e., that still follow most house rules).

In the case where the child is really defiant, you will want to use the strategy entitled When You Want Something From Your Kid (session #3).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:44AM (-07:00)

## He did not come home last night...

Tuesday, July 01, 2008

Hi C.,

~~~~~I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi Mark,

Thanks for all your help and insights. I have finished reading the ebook and finished through session three of the online course work. Our son, I\_\_\_, turned 18 yesterday and will be a senior in August. I\_\_\_ came home yesterday afternoon (after being gone since Friday afternoon) looking for money or birthday presents from family members (grandparents, aunts, etc).

~~~~~Sounds like what an over-indulged kid would do.

I used the "poker face" strategy and listened to him during what amounted to a temper tantrum. After he yelled, cussed and threw things, he left the house. He called me three hours later and was extremely apologetic, telling me he loved me, missed me, etc. While he was home, I calmly told him that when he was out past curfew or did not come home

at all, it caused a problem for me, because I couldn't sleep well and if he wanted to continue to live at home with the benefits we provide (use of a car, use of a phone, a roof over his head, food, clothing, paid college) he would need to come home each night by curfew. He reminded me that curfew no longer applied to him (since he's 18) and I responded that it was a condition of his living at home, not a law.

**````This was right on track – good job!**

He asked for money and I gave him \$5 tying the money to the chores he did Friday -- cleaning his room, mowing the yard and doing laundry. I emphasized the importance of earning money to become self reliant. He came home around 6 p.m. to "see me" and said he would be home last night by 1 a.m. and would like to have a birthday dinner tonight. He did not come home last night.

I really want to do this right ("no half measures"), and would appreciate some guidance from you. A couple of questions.....1) if he comes home tonight, what is the appropriate discipline for not coming home last night?

**````Let's stop right here! Please don't get upset with me. I'm sure you want the truth though:**

**You will never win in this cat-and-mouse game. Why? Because he is no longer living in your home regularly – and he is managing financially, at some level, without you.**

**I think the game is over. Save you precious time and energy for other things. You may be beyond "discipline" with him.**

**The recommendation is not about what is an appropriate discipline – rather it is about helping him move out – permanently ...helping him find a job and get his own place.**

2) should I emphasize coming home at night and tackle the time he comes home after he starts coming home or should I link the two enforcing the need to be home at a certain time ie 11pm during the week?

````I want to help you break through some possible denial on your part. He will come and go as he damn well pleases. Whenever he doesn't like a particular rule – he's gone again. This doesn't mean he's a bad kid – he just an adult now.

3) what should be next steps if he doesn't come home tonight? 4) We are going out of home for the 4th of July and would like him to come with us. Our older daughter (20) will be staying at home because she works. What strategies can we use to get him to come with us? I don't want him at home if he doesn't come with us because I'm concerned he will have parties. How do I keep him out if he wants in?

````Change the locks. It's not that expensive or time consuming to do.

Last month we told him he had to stay with a friend if he didn't come with us and he stayed at the friend's for a few hours, then went home and borrowed an extension ladder from a neighbor and went in through an upstairs window tripping the alarm. The police came and he showed them his driver's license and they let him in the house. 5) We live in Fishers. Is the Madison County parents program open to non-county residents?

~~~~~Yes.

The strategies I was able to use yesterday were very effective. I\_\_\_ changed his approach dramatically in just a few hours, although very short lived. I want to be sure I get the next steps right to ensure the most positive outcome possible. I really appreciate your help. After years of counseling, this approach has the potential to be much more effective long term.

~~~~~I've been kind of tough on you here, but I want to give you the best possible recommendation.

**Bottom line: He needs to find another place to live. Use the strategies when he comes to visit.**

**Shift from "what can I do to keep my son" ...to "what can I do to help him be independent."**

I'm interested in your feedback on my recommendations,

**Mark**

My Out-of-Control Teen

.....

Hi Mark,

You asked for feedback on your recommendations....my first reaction was sadness. Sadness for my son and the difficult life he has ahead of him and sadness that, although I put a lot of effort into parenting, my approach did not work, and I didn't get it figured out until too late in the game.

I agree with your recommendation that I have to move from "discipline" to helping him become independent. I will work with him to either follow the household rules or find another place to live. I'm at a point where I truly am comfortable with either solution. If he is going to be disruptive at home, I would prefer he leave. The irony is that he can sense that I am sincere about forcing him to find alternative living arrangements, and he has become more compliant in response.

Thanks for your insights. The course is extremely helpful because it is so specific, outlining exactly what needs to be said and what actions need to be taken. I wish I had discovered it years ago.

Kind regards,

C.

.....

Hi C.,

Thank you for having an open spirit to the change process.

Your statement *"I'm at a point where I truly am comfortable with either solution"* ...tells me that you are nearing the point of acceptance in the grief process AND "letting go" of some emotional baggage. This is a good thing.

You are working the program -- great job. There will be a reward at the end of the tunnel in some shape, form or fashion.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:36AM (-07:00)

## I don't feel I can take away her car or gas money as then she could...

Wednesday, July 02, 2008

I am a single parent of a 16 yr old girl. I had to quit my job or move last year. I quit my job and began working out of town often last year.

My daughter dropped out of high school (she was in AP) and just took the high school proficiency because she wants to go directly to college. Part of the agreement was that she would go out and get a job to pay for her gas and incidentals. She says she is looking for a job, but she hasn't put in any applications. We live out of town, and she has a college summer school class 4 nights a week. I don't feel I can take away her car or gas money as then she could not go to school or look for work. Any suggestions?

.....

She should "earn" gas money and money for incidentals by performing chores around the house if she can't – or won't – find employment at a place of business. "Earning" her gas money and freedom is the larger issue here.

Now she can have a choice, work at home – or work out of the home, but it should be one or the other. Otherwise, you are back to over-indulgence again.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:50AM (-07:00)

## Daughter getting up and going to school on time...

Thursday, July 03, 2008

Dear Mark,

My husband and I have started on your course for out of control teens. It is a work in progress and we are up to week three course doing the second set of assignments. Having success in many areas.

One area we are having a lot of trouble in is, with our daughter getting up and going to school on time, She is 14 in year 9 at school in Australia. Are there any suggestions that you can make regarding this? She wakes up early enough but puts on the "go slow." We live within walking distance of the school. We offer to drive her if she is ready by 8.30 as school starts at 8.45. A couple of times she has achieved this. Mostly she doesn't care though and walks to school arriving after 9 to 9.30 and misses the first lesson every day. For a while she had been truanting school, about 3 weeks of this 10 week term and has been late every day except the couple.

The school has her on what's called a 'level three', which means no excursions, no sport. (She doesn't want to do sport any way). Because of the truanting and lateness to school. Her behaviour in class is good. Next step is suspension.

Her teachers say she is a very intelligent girl ...we need some suggestions if you can please help.

Also further down the track we need to know ways to encourage her to do her homework, which she doesn't do.

Thank you for you help regarding the above matter.

Regards

J.

.....

Hi J.,

School is your daughter's job -- not yours. The more you take responsibility for her getting up and getting to school on time -- the less responsibility she will take for this.

I'm guessing that her "getting to school" is more important to YOU than it is to her. Let go of playing "time keeper" ...let go of playing "taxi cab driver" ...don't "nag" her about getting off to school in a timely fashion.

Give her one (1) wake up call. The rest is up to her. If she wants to choose to be late -- allow it. She will get a natural consequence through the school (actually she already has).

Now your next question may be "What if she gets suspended." Let's cross that bridge when we get to it. In the meantime, let her make poor choices -- and let her experience the consequences associated with those poor choices. But most importantly, STOP taking responsibility for her work (i.e., complying with school policies and procedures, doing homework, etc.).

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:12AM (-07:00)

# How do I get an over-achiever to slow down?

Friday, July 04, 2008

I have taken the quiz and surprisingly found that I was a severely over indulgent parent. This angers me because I didn't think I was. The question is: How do I get an over-achiever to slow down? There's more to the story but that is the 'gist' of the situation - she is not sleeping because of work and she wants more money.

.....

Hi R.,

Overachievers rarely express their genuine feelings. They are driven to succeed and try fiercely to be independent. But many are actually very dependent on outside accomplishments to justify their existence. These teens can crash emotionally when they experience rejection or failure such as the break-up of a relationship or failing to be admitted to a "competitive" university. The most important message a parent can send to an overachieving teen is "I know you are human and struggling just like everyone."

"Overachieving behavior" is often a mask for depression. The onset of depression during the teenage years can be gradual or sudden, brief or long-term; and it can be hidden or "masked" by other clinical conditions such as anxiety, eating disorders, hyperactivity, and substance abuse. Although the incidence of more severe depression is less than 10 percent in all teenagers, many of the symptoms (sadness, poor appetite, inability to sleep, physical complaints) are seen more often. In fact, research has shown that up to a third of all teens experience some of these symptoms, even so-called "normal" teens.

If you suspect that your child is struggling with signs of depression, there are positive ways to help. Some of these ways include:

``Encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings; listen to their concerns without being judgmental; acknowledge the pain and suffering.

``Share similar unpleasant experiences that ended positively to provide a basis of hope; but make sure not to minimize their concerns and worries.

``Seek professional help from someone experienced in normal adolescent developmental changes.

``The possibility of suicide is always there. References, threats and attempts at hurting oneself should always be taken seriously.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:00AM (-07:00)



## Do you think a camp would help?

Monday, July 07, 2008

I just ordered your OPS e-book and have been going over it. Our 17 YO son is very rebellious and demanding. He is very materialistic but is not motivated to work for his "stuff". We have tried many techniques but haven't found any that work. We are indulgent parents and he fits your model. We will implement your techniques but feel more may be needed and we were thinking about a camp. We think the separation from us may be helpful and will open his eyes. Today is his birthday and we have yet to come up with a plan because of his behavior yesterday when he told my wife to shut up when she made him get off the computer and refused to give him more free time because he did not do his small chores. Do you think a camp would help?

He was diagnosed as ADHD by an Army doctor, but a later analysis by a psychologist revealed he only had a motivation problem. He gets in a lot of trouble at school to include smoking and hanging out with the wrong crowd. We have had to limit his music listening because it sounds very violent. I am rambling so will sign off but interested in your view. We will order the CDs to listen to while driving.

Sincerely,

C.,

.....

Hi C.,

Re: *Do you think a camp would help?*

I don't think it would hurt. But sending a child to camp is just another traditional parenting strategy that will have very little bang for your buck.

Re: *He was diagnosed as ADHD by an Army doctor, but a later analysis by a psychologist revealed he only had a motivation problem.*

This is just 2 different names for the same problem (i.e., your son is only motivated to do that which he has an interest in).

I would encourage you to simply work the program for now – one week at a time – and nothing more. Then see how things are going in about 3 – 4 weeks.

I know you want a break FROM your son, but now you have the tools you need to set up a better parent-child relationship such that you won't need a time-out away from him.

Mark

**P.S. ==> BESURE to watch ALL the Instructional Videos!!!**

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:17AM (-07:00)

# I have the feeling that the reason he wants to stay out is so that ...

Tuesday, July 08, 2008

Hi Mark

My husband and I started watching the videos and read the ebook. My son left me a note saying that he would be home at 12:30 a.m. tonight Curfew is 12:00 I did the 4 step in the fighting fairly with him when I called his cell phone. He asked if he could stay the night and I went through the steps. Then he said well tomorrow I am going to stay at someone's house, I don't know who's yet. I said we would talk later about this. I have the feeling that the reason he wants to stay out is so that he can get stoned on pot and not have to come home and for me to rag him out about this. Last week he was at friends all week when we were on holidays, after he told our friends that he didn't want to stay at their home. My friend J\_\_ said that her son M\_\_ told C\_\_ the first day the hey if you had a couple of beers not a problem with my mom just do not come home falling down drunk but do not come in the house stoned and she feels that is why he took off from her place and went and stayed and someone else's house. Some of these parents have no clue that the kids in this group of friends are smoking up in the backyard or at the neighbourhood playground at night and then they come in and go to the basement and crash.

What do I do now with this sleep over issue, when he says this week he is staying at someone's home. Alot of the friends are working full time and some of them have told me that they are distancing themselves from him because of what he is into and that he is becoming aggressive but there are others that would let him stay.

What is the plan?

Thanks for your help.

A.

.....

Hi A.,

You will want to use the strategy entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [Session #3 - Week #3]. But I would discourage you from leaping ahead and working out of sequence.

Also, be sure to look at the section entitled "Read these Emails from Exasperated Parents" [Session #4]. Alcohol & drug abuse is addressed in that section.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:26AM (-07:00)

# Should I tell the probation officer?

Tuesday, July 08, 2008

Hi Mr. Hutten,

Just wanted to let you know how appreciative my husband and I are for your website. We are a committed christian family that is dealing with a 15 yr. old ADHD daughter with oppositionality. I am in the process of reading your ebook. You won't be surprised to hear that for the past 2 years she has been to a psychiatrist and counselors to deal with her challenges and anger - she can sometimes be explosive. These behaviors manifested as a toddler and she was a difficult baby. We have 3 others kids who don't struggle with these challenges although the pain, heartache and despair we at times experience as parents does not go unnoticed by the other three.

A few months back my daughter hit me after being put on concerta, which made her very irritable. It is no excuse, but I called the cops and they "arrested" her. I called her doctor and we took her off the meds. We went to court, she was put on probation and comm. service.

Inside this kid has christian convictions and stands up for what she believes. She lies alot but I do believe that shes not on drugs, drinking or having sex which she yells at us about and thinks she is a good kid because of it. OK, but its her behavior...and she just doesn't get it. Her disrespect is thru the roof, etc. Recently, I went on her IM log and found out she decieved me by saying she was sleeping at her friends house...I said I need to talk to the parent to confirm...so she has her friend's parent call me, which in reality was one of her guy friends posing as a father. She had been to a all-nite party ...we later found out thru the log. My question is should I tell the probation officer?

She also told us she was going to bed early one nite, which was strange so I went up an hour later only to find she snuck out and stuffed her bed. Someone said "what kid hasn't done that." Needless to say we punished her. Texting on the phone, Facebook and some social life has been taken away....My main goal for her is to learn and succeed, do need to tell her probation officer the whole thing? I worried about what will happen. She has been trying harder in other ways. she is seeing her counselor regularly. I don't want to "crush" her if you know what I mean. She doesn't hang out with bad kids. (You wouldn't believe all the friends she has for an ADHDer) all her friends come from good families. No one knows she is on probation or anything else (not even her grandparents who we are really close to because it would devastate them.)

I apologize for the length of this email. It is difficult because you cannot talk to other parents about these things, and I needed to tell you. Thanks again for your website, I am going thru it with a fine-toothed comb! It is a God-send.

Regards,

M.

.....

Hi M.,

Re: *My question is should I tell the probation officer?*

Absolutely! You want to (a) model the truth and (b) hold her accountable. Just report it – and tell your daughter that you will always have a commitment to the truth. This is a relatively minor problem – and I’m sure her PO will see it that way too.

Re: *I don't want to "crush" her if you know what I mean.*

I have to be honest with you here. This statement sounds like one that would come from an indulgent parent. Be careful “feeling sorry” for your child. This will work against both you and her. You don’t do your daughter any favors by trying to save her from uncomfortable emotions associated with her poor choices.

No half measures,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:43AM (-07:00)

## Boarding school for my “out of control” teen...

Tuesday, July 08, 2008

Can you recommend a quality boarding school for my “out of control” teen daughter who will be 17 this October. She is has been diagnosed ADD/ADHD and ODD.

Part of the problem is she does not want to help herself.

Thank you for any help you can provide.

Bob

.....

**La Lumiere School** is probably the only one I can feel good about recommending.

The address is: 6801 North Wilhelm Road, La Porte, IN 46350

Phone: 219-326-7450

Their website: <http://www.lalumiere.org/>

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:42AM (-07:00)

# Son with ADHD, ODD & PDD

Tuesday, July 08, 2008

It's been awhile since my first e-mail. I've been trying to follow your information in your manual. Have started to reread the book to refresh myself with some of the instructions on how to control my son. He has still not gotten the picture that he has a problem that needs to be addressed, and worked on. He believes that everyone else is the problem and that no matter what he tries he is wrong. He'll take no advice or be willing to even learn from his own mistakes, which hurt him and then he complains that no one understands him, and won't help.

My son is now 20 (21 november) he was/ is diagnosed with adhd ODD pdd. now refusing to take his meds. his own research shows side effects, this scares him, thats why he refuses.

Question? thru your many studies and other parents that you have talked to, have you ever found that a child has over the years developed a symptom of paranoia, with anxiety attacks. and has become a habitual liar? he now breaks out with the terrible sweats, and is afraid that someone will break into our house and steal his Xbox games and systems, and the temperature needs to be at 60 degrees in the house. I'm not rich and can't afford the electric bill I just got, \$375.00 for one month.

I'm going to be in touch with the U of PA. hospital Philadelphia Pa for reevaluation of his disorders as something drastic has change. It's also unfortunate that we had to loose our previous services because of an insurance change at work, they don't accept this insurance now, and we temporarily lost our medical assistance for his disability do to some paper work foul up that was recently resolved in court.

Can you make any suggestions as to what we might ask the hospital to be looking for? tests, blood work, brain scans etc. any thing will help. what type of assisted living facilities might be good for him so that he is not totally dependent on us, as it is really taking a toll on the wife and I. I just cancelled my vacation plans because he refused to stay at another family members home so that he could go to his part time job while we were away.

Thanks

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Albeit limited, the info you have provided suggests that your son may have Agoraphobia or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. I would definitely look into these two diagnoses as a possibility.

Unfortunately, this may be a classic example of what happens to a child after years of over-indulgence. Your son will be 20-years-old, and he still lives at home playing Xbox. He does not have a clue about how to survive as an adult out in the real world.

Children with Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) do have difficulty using and understanding language ...difficulty relating to people, objects, and events ...difficulty with changes in routine or familiar surroundings ...and they exhibit unusual play with toys and other objects. So they are not easy children to parent – I understand this.

In any event, there is no known cure for PDD. Medications are used to address certain behavioral problems. If he is not willing to take his meds – and you go along with this – then you are employing an over-indulgent parenting style.

Begin helping him to help himself. This should be the first course of action. Hold him accountable for not taking his meds. Not taking meds needs a consequence -- and perhaps a serious one at that (e.g., him living elsewhere).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

.....

Mark,

I will be looking into the additional diagnoses, which I already suspected but was told by therapist and other professionals? in the field he did not have these.

Over indulgence has not taken place with L\_\_\_\_, as he was growing up just the opposite was happening things were not just given to him he had to earn them, or points to get privileges because of his bad temper bad behavior and not wanting to do anything that was asked of him, help with the cleaning, help make the beds help take out the trash, help, help, help, his answer was always NO. it's not my job!

He was diagnosed with PDD but as you explain it he shows no sign of these things. I think the professionals? put this on his charts as they could not come up with a better diagnoses.

As for meds they are out on the table for him to take, when i come home he hasn't taken them, then i try for hrs to have him take them. and then he gets mad enough that he starts to verbally threaten, I stop ...consequences lead to house destruction.

I know that the meds he is now taking do not help very much maybe 10%, he's been on so many over the years and nothing has really helped, some have just done the opposite made him worse. Professionals?

Yes I think you can here in my voice that even the system that he has been in, with hospital stays (4) counselors, therapist, behavior specialist, and I can go on, have not been much help with him or with us as a family trying very hard to stay together. wife, daughter (16) myself and L\_\_\_\_. One DR. even told me in all the years of his practice (20) he has never seen someone like L\_\_\_\_. I told him to do a case study and write a book on Larry.

Today my wife had enough and thought there was going to be a fight between me and L\_\_\_\_, and went to her sisters, for the weekend. all because I refused to take L\_\_\_\_ out for chinese food after I said I would, but he did something that he was not supposed to and had to pay the consequence and not be taken. Vulgar remarks and calling me slanderous

names. which he was repeatedly told not to do the night before, that night he did it again, he must have called me at work 6 times asking if we were still going. now he says will I take him tomorrow, even though he is still calling me names, and cursing.

Myself I'm starting to break down, I'm ready to take him to the hospital and let them make the decisions, as to how to best treat him, away from the home. this is very upsetting to me as I've been the biggest advocate to get the best services for him and treatment. but I know all that will happen is word treatment.  
what to do, what to do?

L.

.....

Hello again L.,

Re: what to do?

The first thing to do is to find a GOOD psychiatrist and have him/her do a Comprehensive Psychiatric Evaluation in order to come up with a proper diagnosis.

I'm very puzzled here. You say that over-indulgence has not taken place with your son, yet as you describe his behavior, he sounds exactly like an over-indulged child.

Either you are in a state of denial about this -- or I'm missing something.

Very confused,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:23AM (-07:00)

## If she does have some measure of a borderline personality disorder,...

Wednesday, July 09, 2008

Hi Mark,

Thank you so much for your answer. I did tell my daughter that I would be truthful from the beginning. I guess I'm fearful at times because of her psychiatric diagnosis. She is what Dr. Greene calls inflexible-explosive, plus Adhd and mood issues. I questioned the counselors to see if there is any evidence of personality disorder. They seem not to think so, but I'm not so sure. She has been tested by a neuro-psych doctor. But nothing more came of it except for a 504 accomodation plan, which was very much needed. If she does have some measure of a borderline personality disorder, I can still apply all the parenting techniques in your e-book, correct? She is intensely self-centered and doesn't seem to "get it". I know self-centeredness is common in teens but with her it is much more so, also, she is nice to everyone except family members.

I took the test and I failed with flying colors! The result was I was a severely indulgent parent, which surprised me because I didn't see myself that way. How blinded I became thru this difficulty.

You know, when we as parents are trying to raise difficult kids...we give in to them at times to reduce the stress and chaos on the family, but in the end it all comes back to bite us.

Thank you once again for all you are doing for so many hurting families. You are realigning us and teaching us to walk straight and not waiver so we can reach the end of this difficult path.

Best regards,

M.

.....

Hi M.,

*Re: If she does have some measure of a borderline personality disorder, I can still apply all the parenting techniques in your e-book, correct?*

Absolutely ...Borderline Personality is just the adult, female version of Oppositional Defiant Disorder. **CLICK HERE** for one of my Podcasts on the subject (sorry for the poor video/audio quality).

Keep in mind that BPD and ODD and just labels for a particular pattern of behavior. Labels don't make kids "bad" – labels simply help us in the "helping professions" to narrow-down a range of treatment options.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:33AM (-07:00)

## Life goes by one day at a time...

Wednesday, July 09, 2008

Mark,

Life goes by one day at a time. M\_\_\_\_\_ has racked up quite a debt. Most of these are bills that had to be paid (IE. court ordered "anger management class", secretary of state fee, repair of house damage etc) which Mom/Dad have paid and that he is required to pay back (and knows this and has accepted this and does have a job). His paycheck is direct deposited to an account over which he has no control. My dilemma is how much should he get for spending each week. Summer is (unfortunately) a slow time at his job and he may only take home \$50 each week. Earlier we had told him he could have 1/3 of his pay each week for spending (additional 1/3 for saving, and 1/3 for a larger parent approved purchase). He is demanding the 1/3 but we (parents) feel this should be



omitted/decreased due to the sizable debt. He also had his license taken away for 2 months so he is not using gas--but maybe is paying friends? Now I find \$65 in his wallet (have only given him \$20 in past month or so) and wondering if he is stealing/selling drugs or something. He has done both in the past. Wondering if having a little money would decrease his temptation for this.

He has never tested positive for drugs, but talks about them often and believe he has sold them. His "best friend" recently caught trying to package up weed and with \$500 on him and had to go back to the youth home for this. What is your experience with this--selling/glamour of selling and not using? Any way to try to investigate this? Have not found any drugs in the home for over 6 month and then it was prescription drugs (ADHD med, and Oxycontin but was accused of trying to sell weed in school).

M\_\_\_\_\_ seems to have 2 sets of "friends". Those we approve of and another set we believe are into drugs/juvenile system, etc and who we don't really know. We would like to encourage the former without being obvious. Any suggestions on how to foster these friendships and discourage the others? We feel the more he associates with these types of kids and the less often he gets consequences the more re-enforcement/freedoms he will earn and the less attractive the alternative will be (that's the idea anyway). As a teen, he would like a few bucks for movies, food, etc. Would giving him some of his earned money discourage the bad decisions? Is having no money at all making him feel desperate? I thought not giving him money may motivate him to do odd jobs around the house/grandparents house for pay, but this has not worked. It will take longer to pay off the debts but want to do the right thing. What is your advice for this?

Another question. M\_\_\_\_\_ missed curfew (by almost 3 hours) Saturday and then got caught trying to let his girlfriend in the house an hour later. He told us when he left that he would not be home by his curfew. He was given 5 days of no going out (no one over for 2 days and if stayed home and kept house tidy could have a friend over after that). Sunday night he just left at 11:00pm (disappeared without a word--older brother happened to see him get in a car). He did answer his phone at first, then stopped answering. Excuse for going out was phony (first had to go get a pair of "pants" but came home without them, then he left because he was angry but took a shower first and waited until "friends" picked him up and there was no confrontation with anybody at home before this). Came back 35-45minutes later. Car he was in was packed full of teens. His 5 days started over, and lost cell phone and computer as well. He then lost cell phone use for when he stopped answering phone (this was for 2 days and if answered house phone when I was at work to prove he stayed home he earned back) and told he was responsible to answer when away from home or would lose it again. He would earn computer back if no swearing for 2 days (swore at the dinner table so 2 days started over). Stayed home yesterday. Answered phone today. I found the \$65 but just coincidentally after he was out with these kids (I don't know them). My question is should I have approached the car when he came home? If so, what should I have said?

He did come to me in the night after this asking me to not call his PO about this and that he does not want to "go away for 6 months" (if he is placed out of state in a program). I did tell him I would not call immediately and would see how he followed the rules day by day but that when she came for her visit on Thursday that I had an obligation to tell the truth and had every intention of doing so. He feels because he is 17 1/2 and has the potential of being off probation end of July that the court will not keep him on probation any longer and will not send him away to a program because he is "too old". He also threatens to do as he pleases when that happens. Yes, we can make him leave at 18, but

not before.

Thanks for your advice.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

You've listed quite a few questions here. I'll try to answer as many as I can in the time I have.

*Re: My dilemma is how much should he get for spending each week.*

I like your 33% rule. Letting him take possession of 1/3 of his earnings sounds reasonable to me.

*Re: What is your experience with this--selling/glamour of selling and not using?*

I have kids on probation who sell drugs – both for money and prestige – but who don't "use" due to weekly urine screens. This is very common. The money is really good as long as you're in the game. Fortunately, most "players" get removed from the game sooner than later.

*Re: Any suggestions on how to foster these friendships and discourage the others?*

In this short space, I have a few suggestions:

- Aim for more family meals together--everyone present. No TV nor phone interruptions are allowed. Attempt pleasant conversation about the day. Avoid using this time together to discuss homework, chores, or other problems. Keep dinnertime conversation positive!
- Be diligent so that your child does not catch "affluent-enza." "Affluent-enza" is when your child says "I want \_\_\_" and it often means "I get \_\_\_."
- Don't put a TV or telephone in your child's own room. If you do, you will surely see them less and argue more! The preteen/teen years are times when you need to be with your child more.
- Get to know the parents of your child's friends. Meet with them and discuss shared expectations when the kids visit each other.
- Manage your own peer pressure! Avoid letting the latest trends rule your buying habits. Don't over-schedule yourself because you can't say "no" to others. Know that the "do as I say, not as I do" approach to parenting will fail.
- Watch less TV and monitor what your kids watch. Just as you wouldn't let your child eat junk food constantly, don't allow junk to go into their minds. Set a rule about quantity and quality of TV and consistently follow through.

Teens must be taught how subtle peer pressure can be. It can sound nice and friendly when someone says, "We won't get caught. It'll be fun and everyone is going to be there." Teens must be taught to think logically, rather than emotionally, when with friends. And, of course, most important is to teach them what they can say or do to comfortably manage negative peer pressure. And it's got to be more than just teaching them to just say "no" or walk away. Those two techniques are the least likely way that kids will feel

okay and be effective in managing the trouble traps. Kids can be taught to joke their way out of trouble, including suggesting a better idea, using flattery, making a true excuse, and learning to return the challenge when dared.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:58AM (-07:00)

## I am just hanging on!

Thursday, July 10, 2008

Hi Mark

Well I did not skip to lesson #3 I am just hanging on!

I told C\_\_\_ issue lesson #1 tips on what I needed him to do etc. not using the you and steps in lesson #1 and everything the first night it worked. He was even home earlier then curfew agreed upon.

Last night I used the same technique and he said I told you that he was staying out all night some where. I said I expected him home etc.

He said the was saying at M\_\_\_'s house and he was out with some other friends etc. and that Mark was leaving the door open for him.

This morning I phoned over to M\_\_\_'s house and he did not stay there the mother checked the house. I called his cell phone and he said he stayed at some girl's house and would be home later.

I called another friend of his and he said he was out with the drug seller in our neighbourhood last night as well. This girl he was with also does drugs. His friend said he is smoking pot and doing mushrooms as well.

Today he came back home and is sleeping all day. I used the assignment I love you and there are going to be changes around here. Do I just sit tight until I get to the next lesson? What should I do? He said this afternoon when he got up for a bit that he did tell me he was going to be out some night this week for the whole night>

Help!

.....

Hi A.,

I know this is hard for you to "hang on." But if you do not lay down the groundwork first (outlined in the beginning of the program), then you'll run the risk of failure with this method.

Re: Do I just sit tight until I get to the next lesson? What should I do?

Parents should use their old parenting methods until they are instructed to do otherwise (which you will be in Sessions #3 and #4).

Patience is key when implementing change!

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:30AM (-07:00)

## I have been very passive in my approach with her knowing that she c...

Thursday, July 10, 2008

Hi S.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

Dear Mark -

I just signed onto your program last week and have a situation going on that I just do not know what to do.

I have a 14 year old girl using drugs and on the run most of the time.

**== >First of all, don't threaten her. Avoid the temptation to say things like, "If you walk out that door, I'm calling the cops" or "If you leave, you're grounded for a month." or "Fine, go ahead and run ...I'll pack your shit and you can go live with your dad."**

**Instead say, "You know that I can't control you -- and if you really want to run away from home, I can't stop you. I can't watch you 24 hours a day, and I can't lock you up in your room. But no one in the world loves you the way I do. That is why we have established some house rules. Running away from home will not solve any problems. You and I know it will only make matters worse."**

If your daughter follows through with her threat to run away, do the following:

1. Call the police. Don't wait 24 hours -- do it right away.
2. Get the name of the officer you speak with.
3. Call back often.
4. Call everyone your daughter knows and enlist their help.
5. Search everywhere, but do not leave your phone unattended.
6. Search your daughter's room for anything that may give you a clue as to where she went.
7. You may also want to check your phone bill for any calls she made in the last few weeks.

When she comes home, wait until you and she are calmed down before you address the matter. Then say (with your best poker face), *"When you ran away, I felt worried and*

***afraid. But I have an obligation to protect you. Therefore, if you choose to run away again, you'll choose the consequence -- runaway charges will be filed and a juvenile probation officer will want to meet with you."***

**If your daughter runs again, follow through with this consequence.**

I am writing to you now because she came home last evening (walked past us and went to bed). I cluelessly have said or done nothing yet. History says she will dismiss me no matter how friendly my approach. The trigger for her last run a couple weeks ago was when she returned from her previous run and I invited her to go along on a trip to the vet with our dog. She went for the bedroom door to dismiss me.

I have been very passive in my approach with her knowing that she could probably kick my butt if a confrontation turned physical. Deciding not to act from fear, I have begun self-defense and Taekwon-do classes. My decision was no longer to allow her verbal abuse. So with this I pushed open the bedroom door and said calling me names in my home would not be tolerated. She got passed me, and did get a good slap in as she went on a cursing, ranting and raving mission, grabbing what I think was her drug stash in the back yard and vowing never to return (of course she always does for some clean clothes and a sleeping binge).

This was until very recently my "good" child. Her sister, now 17 will be returning from a Dual Diag. Correctional Facility (Severe Drug Add w/ Bi-polar, ODD, etc) in August. She successfully completed the program in a year after being in Juvenile Detention for 6 Mos. To date, all signs are that she is doing exceptionally well. Recently, as it gets closer to A\_\_\_ coming home and all of us hoping for a fresh start, the younger daughter has gone out of her way to insist that I am a fool and A\_\_\_ will come home and do what she always does.

Until a couple months ago, the younger daughter, S\_\_\_, prided herself in being the smart, over achieving superstar daughter. Over the past year there were 2 incidents that may have been red flags, but I didn't catch them due to her history.

When school got out in May, she began staying out late and taking off to surrounding towns. I told her she was going to have to either get involved in an activity or get a summer job. She told me there would be no way, confessed to smoking weed and after my lecturing the consequences of her choices, she reminded me that there's not a F thing I can do about it and the running began.

She knows that it takes a long time (2 years for her sister) before ANYTHING happens. The police are reluctant to do anything, and here in FLA, short of them getting an arrest history, the rest is a song and dance as you get passed from one agency to the next.

I completely understand the problems that probably led to the mess with my daughters. We've done the counseling, I've soul searched and have made peace with God - but now what???? I've given it to God and one source he's led me to is you. What do I do NOW?

I hope you can give me something that can make a difference today.

**==>If her drug use has been purely recreational, you may only need to clearly state your position regarding abstinence and then closely monitor her behavior. If she is more deeply into substance abuse, seek the advice of a behavioral health or substance abuse**

professional.

Don't show any emotions of anger or fear, and don't lose your good poker face -- but do send a strong message that drug and alcohol use is not acceptable. Don't lecture, be clear, and keep your message short and to the point.

Develop a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of her friends. Get to know those kids if possible. Form a network with the parents of her peers. Keep in touch with one another. Don't be surprised if other parents don't share your concern about substance abuse.

Check her whereabouts regularly. Don't be shocked if you find that another parent is using drugs with her, allows substance-abusing parties at their home, or is supplying the kids with drugs and alcohol. If you learn that one of her friends is involved in drugs, don't keep it a secret from his/her parents.

Restrict or eliminate use of the car, take away cell phones, and limit unsupervised free time until she is committed to being "*clean and sober*." An out-of-control kid wants freedom more than anything -- let her know that freedom is earned.

If she wants to spend the night at a friend's house, check with the other parent to make sure she has permission. Also make sure the other parent will be home, and determine if the other parent has the same curfew and expectations you do.

Kids often select homes of absent parents for sleep-overs and all-night drug/alcohol parties. Make sure she is not sneaking out after you go to bed. Nothing good happens after midnight.

Get *Caller ID* and *Anonymous Call Rejection* on the phone line that she uses so that you know who is calling her. Require that she call home from a "land line" phone so that the location she is calling from appears on your *Caller ID*.

Find out where she is getting the money to purchase drugs (e.g., your ATM card, wallet, money you give for an allowance, lunches, gas, etc.). Don't be surprised if you find she is stealing from you or others to finance his drug use.

Purchase *urine-screen kits* to use at home and test her randomly.

Tell her the following: *"If you choose to use drugs, you'll choose the consequence -- the police will be called and juvenile probation will be notified."*

If she continues to use drugs, follow through with this consequence.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:30AM (-07:00)

## Would he not be exposed to more criminal active and get more tools ...

Friday, July 11, 2008

I checked with our lawyer if I charge C\_\_ with theft he would go to a group home. Would he not be exposed to more criminal active and get more tools to the trade?  
what are your thoughts?

Tonight he took off on me tonight, I used the steps and took his cell phone and computer and he demanded his computer from me. I said the 'no' once and I am not arguing etc. He said he was going out I said he was grounded and if he left I would start the grounding all over again etc. He took some clothes with him. He told me that he is very mad and wants to punch people out etc. who ever is talking about him, I had told him that I received a call from a parent that is concerned about him hanging with the wrong group and that he is doing things that he should not be doing. He said a list of the adults that he would not do anything to.

I was a little scared and he said he thought the computer is in the car and that he wanted the keys but he did not touch me. He said he likes smoking pot and he said i want to show you something then showed me the bong and told me that it is not his and I said that is what every body says that it's not theirs. I said this with no anger and my poker face. I said I would have to call the police if he is running away and he said that he can out smart the police that when the doorbell rings he is gone.

.....

Hi A.,

Re: I checked with our lawyer if I charge Chris with theft he would go to a group home.

With all due respect to your lawyer, I think he gave you some misinformation. Assuming this would be your son's first encounter with the juvenile justice system, he would probably receive what is called an "Informal Adjustment." I don't have time to explain that now. Call your local juvenile probation dept. and pick their brain on this.

Re: Would he not be exposed to more criminal active and get more tools to the trade?

As I stated earlier, it is highly unlikely that he would be going to some group home. Judges DON'T "sentence" first-time offenders to "placement."

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:38AM (-07:00)

## Any good resources out there that may be of help with the behavior ...

Friday, July 11, 2008

Hi Mark,

I am a Elementary school teacher (3rd. grade) who is doing their homework in the preparation of receiving next school year a little girl who exhibits all the classic symptoms of ODD. (I will forward your information about your book on to her parents and try to help them as best I can.)

My main purpose for writing you is to get ideas that I can use in the classroom for behavior management of this disorder. (My guess is that this little girl will be placed in the SBH unit one day or given home instruction.) I want to begin the year prepared and having a plan in place. I hope to meet with her adoptive parents before the year begins and get them on-board with working with me. Is there anything you would suggest in planning to deal with her behavior? Any good resources out there that may be of help with the behavior management end of it? I would appreciate any advise you can give.

Thanks,

Mitch Burton

.....

Hi Mitch,

You may want to consider downloading the eBook. I have many therapists, educators, probation officers, social workers, etc. who have either attending my live seminar or have joined Online Parent Support (the online version of the seminar). The program is not just for parents. Anybody who has to deal with an oppositional defiant child will benefit from the material.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:49AM (-07:00)

## She is a child to walk up to the line and go over it once...

Monday, July 14, 2008

I am considering buying your book but I would like more explanation on your "unconventional" techniques. I have read many books, and some seem to help for a little while and then something new comes up that I don't know how to deal with. She is a child to walk up to the line and go over it once, but then seems to keep going right up to the line, but not quite crossing it, over and over.



W.

.....

Hi W.,

All I mean by "unconventional" is that some of the techniques in the eBook are also used by therapists and psychologists to build a "therapeutic alliance" with their clients. In this case, you will be using the techniques to build an alliance - or bond - with your child.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:21AM (-07:00)

## How do I handle my son's way of talking to me?

Thursday, July 17, 2008

Hi Mark

How do I handle my son's way of talking to me? I mean he never talks nice. It is "get me this" ...and "do this."

He is 14 almost 15. He says to me that he is a teenager and that I don't understand what a teenager goes through. Little does he realize, that I have been there too!! Example: He ask me to buy him a xbox 360 yesterday and I answer him no because all he want everyday is to buy games, or whatever. And he does nothing around the house, and I mean nothing, Garbage, blue box putting his clothes away is all we ask, and he does nothing so I am fed up and I don't feel he deserves anything as he does nothing. Finally after seeing his clothes still in the basket in his room after 3 days I get pissed off and tell my husband to get on his case, But when I do that my husband has a fit and tells me that I cannot control MY KIDS, (his kids too.) Anyway my son will then do it as my husband tells him to do it. Anyway getting back to how he speaks to me. He said tome after I told him no to the game, I hate you, you are so fucking me, You are a stupid parent, and I wish you were dead.

This is how he talks everyday. What or how do I handle this? Keep him in his room indefinitely, HELP.

G.

.....

Hi G.,

Re: *...son's way of talking to me...*

You will want to refer to the strategy entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [online version - Session #3] for a detailed method. But let me elaborate a bit here:

The reasons for back talk are as varied as the personalities of the children who use it. The child could be hungry, tired, or in a transitional period. But children who talk back usually do have one thing in common: They're trying to separate from their parents and exercise control over their lives.

How should you handle these outbursts? Parents should do some behavior tracking: For three days, make notes about what your child says, what the situation was, and how you responded. See if you notice any patterns. And keep in mind that when kids talk back, something else is going on underneath. The goal is to help them express it constructively.

### **Six rules for fighting fair—**

You won't ever be able to avoid disagreements with your teen, but you can learn how to fight fair. Adhere to the following rules:

- Define what the problem is
- Define how to rectify it
- Don't attack
- Don't belittle
- Don't condemn
- Figure out what can be done to prevent it in the future

**Teens' Common back talk:** "Leave me alone!" and "It's all your fault!"

**How to respond:** Beware -- they may look like grown-ups, but teenagers are not completely rational. They think differently than adults and children, and often feel they're invulnerable. Be concerned about their responses and listen to them. Help them to see that you're on their side. If they say they want to be left alone, back off but don't give up. Take a more subtle approach. Write them a note without attacking or blaming, and say that you'd like to hear back from them. Always keep the dialogue open. Try talking in a lower voice. If you model screaming and shouting, that's what you'll get in return. And remember, you are always the authority in your house; you can set limits. As parents, you cannot be friends with your children, but you can still treat them in a friendly way.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:28AM (-07:00)

## **I had a meltdown screaming at her and swearing...**

**Thursday, July 17, 2008**

Hello, I am T\_\_\_. A colleague has highly recommended your course I was wondering if you could give me some advice on how to start.

Although I feel my teen is becoming out of control I am feeling out of control myself. This morning I had a meltdown screaming at her and swearing, I am so angry with myself and I know I did more damage than good, I need to learn myself how to control how I react, I am going to sign up for the course but am wondering if I might need to be counselled myself or maybe together with my daughter.

Regards,

T.

.....

Hi T.,

Re: *...I might need to counseled myself.*

You will find a bunch of "parent's anger management" suggestions throughout the eBook.

You've come to the right place!

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:35AM (-07:00)

## My 15 year old daughter was secretly seeing a very unsuitable man o...

Thursday, July 17, 2008

I have just completed your 4 weeks programme and trying very hard to implement all the suggestions. I wish we had come across this several months ago.

We seemed to have a happy peaceful family before Christmas, but since then things fell apart. I realise now that we have indulged our two children and that my daughter especially is used to getting her own way.

My 15 year old daughter was secretly seeing a very unsuitable man of 20. She managed to see him for about 2 months before we realised. Once we found out about it, we sat down as a family and discussed it and asked her not to see him because we felt he was too old and not from our part of town, he also has a GBH tag (Has been in trouble for fighting). At first she seemed to go along with it but one day my husband found them together in bed at our home during school time. Discussions, leading to rages followed, and again asked her not to see him. The pressure built up at home and one day she ran away for a night. The police were called and a Child protection Officer came to talk to us all. We had already been in contact with him because of our concerns for our daughter.

The Child protection officer felt there needed to be compromises on both sides and suggested (as he actually knew the man) that perhaps we should let her see him as he is not considered dangerous. So we agreed she could see him, and she still is.

I feel, had we had the strategies in place before, our daughter may not have continued to see him or even gone behind our backs in the first place.

I feel there is an improvement at home now, but as we have agreed to let her see him - can I or should I try and stop it? Or is it too late and we will just have to wait and hope it

fizzles out.

I would welcome your advice.

L.

.....

Hi L.,

One of my juvenile clients, Kaylee (17-years-old) has pretty much only dated older guys. "The guys in my own grade seem immature, and I've known them forever," she once said.

For Kaylee, dating guys a couple years older has meant having boyfriends who own cars, can afford to buy her nice things, and can take her to parties she wouldn't normally go to. It also means instant new friends — his friends.

And Kaylee's not alone. She says most of her friends have dated older guys, too. So does that mean the age gap is no biggie? Well, not necessarily. Some older guys may be more mature, more experienced, and able to drive, but they also come with more expectations, which may also mean more pressure about a lot of things, including sex. In fact, girls who date older guys are much more likely to have unintended pregnancies than those who date guys their own age. And when teenagers have sex with older partners, legal issues may come into play — but more on that later.

Age doesn't make a sleaze. But some guys do date younger girls to control them and to be idolized.

A good way to figure out an older boyfriend's motives is to look at his reputation and how he's treated past girlfriends. Is he just kind and respectful ... or is he kind and respectful and controlling? This may be hard to determine, since control isn't always as obvious as saying "do this" or "don't do that." People can be controlling in ways that are more subtle. Making partners feel like they have to choose between the relationship and family or friends is one way of being controlling. Checking up on them constantly, or trying to influence them to act, talk, or dress in certain ways are others.

Tyeria, 17, felt an ex who was three years older took the control in the relationship because she was expected to spend most of her time with his friends — he wasn't into her same-age friends. Kaylee also thought she had less control because all of her older boyfriends seemed to be cooler, and she felt pressured trying to fit in with each new, "cooler" set of friends.

A girl who's hooking up with an older guy needs to think about something else, too — the law. Each state has its own laws governing the age of consent — the age at which a person is considered to be old enough to agree to have sex. States can also have different rules depending on whether it's two girls, two guys, a girl and a guy, or even what kind of sex they are having!

People above a state's age of consent who have sex with people below a state's age of consent can be charged with statutory rape. This is true even if the younger people are willing, because the law says they aren't old enough to legally give consent. "Statutory

rape" is a crime that can be punished with a jail sentence for the older person.

Hundreds of older men go to jail every year for having sex with younger women. It can happen in same-sex relationships, too. In one recent case in Indiana, an 18-year-old guy was sentenced to 17 years in prison for having sex with a girl who was just a few days shy of turning 15.

So should your daughter run the other way? Not necessarily. But it's a good idea for her to think things through. Who will be in control? What are her expectations? What are his? What are your risks? Could there be legal problems?

It will also be helpful for her to talk things through with someone whose opinions she can trust and value, whether it's her best friend, a sibling, you the parent, or another trusted adult.

When dating older — and for dating in general — it's best to enter the relationship with your eyes wide open.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:09AM (-07:00)

## Our son has not been a threat to society before or during probation...

Friday, July 18, 2008

Mark,

I have been working on the program from you, although I am only in my second week. We had our Staffing Meeting today to determine placement for D. My husband and I tried to plead our case to the man who will make the recommendation to the court on Tuesday (22nd). Of course he recommended a Level 6 program for 6-9 months. Our son has not been a threat to society before or during probation and we tried to make the man understand that. We shared the strides D has made, but like any teenager he has made some mistakes. We know D has a long way to go and we want to be there for him to help.

Do you know any web pages I can go on to support what we believe, D will not benefit from a Level 6 program?

In advance, thanks for any advise you may be able to provide.

R.

.....

Hi R.,

I'm not familiar with a "Level 6" program. Are you referring to the Department of Corrections -- or a juvenile treatment facility?

Mark

.....

The recommendation is to a Level 6 Juvenile Detention Facility. Level 4 is the lowest in Florida, but I have a feeling there were not any beds and so he was bumped up to a level 6.

R.

.....

Juvenile Detention (at least in Indiana) is much different than the Dept. of Corrections. The longest a juvenile can be detained in a Juvenile Facility is 180 days.

In any event, you should allow your son to experience the full consequences associated with his poor choices. If that's 6 - 9 months of incarceration -- then so be it.

Mark

[www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com](http://www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com)

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:56AM (-07:00)

## It is disrupting our entire family ...

Saturday, July 19, 2008

Hi-

My son constantly annoys his sister (2 yrs younger) and his brother (6yrs younger). We have two other children that he realizes his comments don't affect as much, so he does not aggravate them so much. I am worried about my daughter who is 9 1/2. She is so sensitive and cries daily at the insults that my son gives her. It often times leaves her screaming and calling him names which sometimes leads to a consequence for her for name calling. I try to have them work it out on their own, but this only leads to even bigger fights. I try to encourage them to work together and praise them on the very few times that they are getting along or at least not fighting. This does not seem to be helping. It is disrupting our entire family and I am afraid that it is breaking down my daughter's self esteem. Please help!!!!

J.,

.....

Hi J.,

I find that when parents continue to experience difficulties after 4 weeks, they have missed a couple important pieces.

Let's trouble shoot...

Below is a summary of all the assignments I gave you in the eBook. If parents do not implement most of these assignments, it is often the "kiss of failure."

For example, the transmission in your car has hundreds of parts, but if just one little tiny part is not working -- the whole transmission does not work. The same is true with this "parent program." Omit just one strategy, and the whole plan runs the risk of failing.

Referring to the Online Version of the eBook:

1. Are you asking your son at least one question each day that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or a "no" to demonstrate that you are interested in what is going on in his life?
2. Are you saying to him "I love you" everyday and expecting nothing in return?
3. Are you eating dinner together at least one evening each week -- either at home or out?
4. Are you using the Fair Fighting technique as needed?
5. Do you use "The Art of Saying Yes" whenever your answer is yes?
6. Do you use "The Art of Saying No" whenever your answer is no?
7. Do you catch him in the act of doing something right at least once each day?
8. Do you use the "When You Want Something From Your Kid" approach as needed?
9. Are you using "The Six-Step Approach" when something unexpected pops-up?
10. Do you give him at least one chore each day?
11. Do you find something fun to do with him each week?
12. When you are undecided about what to say or do in any particular situation, are you asking yourself the following question: "Will this promote the development of self-reliance in my son, or will this inhibit the development of self-reliance?" If it is supportive of self-reliance, say it or do it. If it is not supportive, don't!
13. Is he EARNING ALL of his stuff and freedom? (see "Self-Reliance Cycle")?
14. Have you watched ALL the videos in the Online Version of the eBook?
15. Are you putting on your best poker face when "things are going wrong?"
16. And perhaps most importantly, are you doing things to take care of your mental and physical health?

If you answered "no" to any of the above, you are missing some important pieces to the puzzle. Most parents DO miss a few pieces initially -- you can't be expected to remember everything! But don't get frustrated and give up. We must be willing to hang in there for the long haul.

I'm talking about refinement here. Refinement is a necessary tool to use in order to truly be successful with these parenting strategies.

HERE IS THE GOOD NEWS: Parents who refine are, on average, 95% - 100% successful at getting the parent-child difficulties reduced in intensity and severity (i.e., the problems are easily managed).

The same can be true in your case. Continue to refine by emailing me as needed over the next few months. Refinement is a process, not a one-time event.

**How can you help your kids get along better?**

### ***The basics:***

- Being fair is very important, but it is not the same as being equal. Your children need to learn that you will do your best to meet each of their unique needs. Even if you are able to do everything totally equally, your children will still *feel* as if they're not getting a fair share of attention, discipline, or responsiveness from you.
- Don't play favorites.
- Don't typecast. Let each child be who they are. Don't try to pigeonhole or label them.
- Make sure each child has enough time and space of their own. Kids need chances to do their own thing, play with their own friends without their sibling, and they need to have their space and property protected.
- *Never* compare your children. This one is a "biggie".
- Pay attention to the time of day and other patterns in *when* conflicts usually occur. Perhaps a change in the routine, an earlier meal or snack, or a well-planned activity when the kids are at loose ends could help avert your kids' conflicts.
- Plan family activities that are fun for everyone. If your kids have good experiences together, it acts as a buffer when they come into conflict. It's easier to work it out with someone you share warm memories with.
- Set your kids up to cooperate rather than compete. For example, have them race the clock to pick up toys, instead of racing each other.
- Teach your kids positive ways to get attention from each other. Show them how to approach another child and ask them to play.

### ***Be there for each child:***

- Celebrate your children's differences.
- Let each child know they are special—just for whom they are.
- Listen—*really listen*—to how your children feel about what's going on in the family. They may not be so demanding if they know you at least care how they feel.
- Set aside "alone time" for each child. Each parent should spend some one-on-one with each kid on a regular basis. Try to get in at least a few minutes each day. It's amazing how much even just 10 minutes of uninterrupted one-on-one time can mean to your child.
- When you are alone with each child, ask them once in a while what they like most and least about each brother and sister. This will help you keep tabs on their relationships, and also remind you that they probably *do* have some positive feelings for each other!

### ***Resolving conflicts:***

- Don't yell or lecture. It won't help.
- Encourage win-win negotiations, where each side gains something.
- Give your kids reminders. When they start picking on each other, help them remember how to state their feelings to each other. Don't solve the problem for them, just help them remember *how* to problem solve.
- Help your kids develop the skills to work out their conflicts on their own. Teach them how to compromise, respect one another, divide things fairly, etc. Give them the tools, then express your confidence that they can work it out, by telling them, "I'm sure you two can figure out a solution." Don't get drawn in.
- If you are constantly angry at your kids, no wonder they are angry at each other! Anger feeds on itself. Learn to manage *your* anger, so you can teach your children how to manage *theirs*.
- In a conflict, give your kids a chance to express their feelings about each other. Don't try to talk them out of their feelings. Help your kids find words for their feelings. Show



- them how to talk about their feelings, without yelling, name-calling, or violence.
- It doesn't matter "who started it," because it takes two to make a quarrel. Hold children equally responsible when ground rules get broken.
- Model good conflict resolution skills for your kids.
- Research shows that while you should pay attention to your kids' conflicts (so that no one gets hurt, and you notice abuse if it occurs), it's best not to intervene. When parents jump into sibling spats, they often protect one child (usually the younger sibling) against the other (usually the older one). This escalates the conflict, because the older child resents the younger, and the younger feels that they can get away with more since the parent is "on their side."
- Teach conflict resolution skills during calm times.

***When to intervene:***

- If your children are physically violent with each other, and/or one child is always the victim and doesn't fight back, you are dealing with sibling abuse. You should probably seek professional help.
- Dangerous fights need to be stopped immediately. Separate the children. When they have calmed down, talk about what happened and make it very clear that no violence is ever allowed.

***Involve your children in setting ground rules. Ground rules, with clear and consistent consequences for breaking them, can help prevent many squabbles. Here are a few ideas:***

- Any child who demands to be first, will go last.
- If arguing over who gets first choice of bedtime stories or favorite seats in the car is a problem, assign your kids certain days of the week to be the one to make these choices
- If borrowing is a problem, have the child who borrows something from a brother or sister put up collateral—a possession that will be returned only when the borrowed item is returned.
- If the kids fight over a toy, the toy goes into time-out.
- In a conflict, no hurting (hitting, kicking, pinching, etc.) is allowed.
- No fighting in the car, or you will pull over and stop until all is calm again.
- No making fun of a child who is being punished, or you get the same punishment.
- No name-calling, yelling, or tattling is allowed.

**What are family meetings, and how can they help with sibling rivalry?**

A family meeting is a meeting for all family members to work together to make family decisions and choices by working together. Parents, children, and any others who live in the home and have a stake in decisions affecting the daily life of the family should take part.. Choose a time that works for everyone.

There are two leadership roles at the family meetings: (1) a chairperson who keeps the meeting on track and sees that everyone's opinion is heard and (2) a secretary who takes notes at the meeting, writes them up and reads the minutes at the next meeting. Parents can assume these duties at the first meeting. Later, other family members should take turns so that no one has total responsibility for these tasks.

The purpose of the family meeting is to recognize that everyone's opinion makes a difference. Family meetings help to build cooperation and responsibility, and it make anger and rebellion less likely. Also, it is a time to share love, develop unity, and to build trust and self-esteem. The social skills and attitudes that children develop within the

family circle are the skills and attitudes they will carry with them the rest of their lives.

**Sample Agenda for Family Meetings: (1)**

- Clarify the issue to be discussed.
- Determine priority issue(s).
- Determine the most effective solutions.
- Discuss family issues, concerns, interests, and positive events of past week.
- Generate possible solutions.
- Make plans to implement the solution.
- Plan one fun activity for the coming week.

**Ground Rules for Family Meetings: (2)**

- Everyone gets a chance to talk
- Everyone has to listen
- No one *has* to talk
- No one puts anyone else down
- Okay to say what you feel
- One person talks at a time and does not get interrupted

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:11AM (-07:00)

## When is this power struggle going to end?

Sunday, July 20, 2008

Hi Mark,

I did what you said below and it worked. Afterwards he and I agreed that he could sleep over at Grandma's, when I went to class.

He ran away again, once in June and once in July. Last weekend when he ran away, I went down to the police station and filed a runaway/missing person report. I told them that he usually ends up at Grandma's house, that he gets in my face, yells at me and pushes me around. The officer said that when they pick him up, they will call me and ask me if I want them to take him in. She didn't give me specifics as to if it was a hold cell, etc. My son is still living at Grandma's and has yet to be picked up.

My son has a key to the back door. I have been blocking the door so he can't enter it as he would come in the house while I am at work for 'his stuff'. But I know that if he can't find something or anything that sets him off, he will break something.

The last 2 months have been really hard. My son calls me stupid F\_\_\_Bitch all the time. He is mad that I signed him up for summer school and refused to do anything. I refused to take him to ride his dirt bike until he hands in his assignments.

He always looks for a fight so he has a reason to get mad and break something. I am trying very hard to stay calm. How do I get him to calm down and realize his inappropriate

actions? When is this power struggle going to end?

Thanks,

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Since you are a single parent, you are the designated "bad guy." Your child probably directs most - if not all - of his anger and rage toward you. But his anger is displaced. He is upset about many different things for many different reasons. Thus, as difficult as it may be, do not take his attacks personally (although in most cases the attacks will need a consequence).

Kids love to argue. They want their ideas to be everyone else's ideas. They like to prove that they are right and you and everyone else are wrong. Kids like to control the situation. They enjoy having power over their parents.

Kids have a need for power. This need is normal; kids see adults as having power. We do what we want to do; at least, that's what our kids think. We appear self-reliant and secure. We are all grown up. We have power. Kids want to be like us. They want power, too.

Having a need for power is not a bad thing. It is only when a son uses power in a negative way that power can become a problem. Power-seeking kids try to do what they want to do. They refuse to do what you ask. Kids who seek power do not like to be told what to do. They resist authority. They like to make the rules. They like to determine how things are going to be done.

Why You Can't Win a Power Struggle? Most parents deal with power by emphasizing counter-control. This does not work. Efforts to control a power-seeking son often lead to a deadlock or power struggle between your son and you. No final victory is ever possible for you. Once you find yourself in a power struggle, you have lost.

If your son wins the power struggle, he is reassured that power caused the victory. You were defeated by his power. If you win the power struggle, your son thinks that it was your power that caused the victory and defeated him. He is reassured of the value of power. This results in kids striking back, again and again, each time with stronger methods. You win the battle but lose the war.

Every kid displays power differently. Most power struggles are active. Arguing is a good example of active power. Some kids have learned the value of passive resistance. Rather than argue, these kids will refuse to do what you asked. They nod their heads and just sit quietly. Some even smile a little. This type of power has a definite purpose-to push your buttons.

Stop being part of the power struggle. It takes two to have a power struggle. It takes two to argue. Make a firm commitment to yourself that you will no longer engage in arguments and lengthy explanations. State your expectations clearly and firmly and walk away. Tell your son exactly what you want him to do, when he must do it, and what

happens if he does not. Then walk away. For example:

P: "It's time to turn off the TV."

C: "I want to watch the next show."

P: "Sorry, it's time to get ready for bed."

C: "Can't I stay up for one more show?"

P: "Not tonight. We have to get up early."

C: "We always have to get up early."

P: "Turn off the TV. Get your shower and go to bed. Do it now, or you will lose TV for tomorrow night."

Do not stay in the situation and argue. Go to your room and close the door if necessary. Do not let your son push your buttons. If you get angry, you will be rewarding him. Your anger will give your son the power over you that he seeks. You may need to use punishment when dealing with power. Tell your son what to do. Be ready with a punishment if your son fails to cooperate. If you punish him because of a power struggle, remember two things. First, do not punish in anger; this will only encourage your son to strike back with power. Second, smaller punishments work better than bigger punishments. If your son thinks you have punished him too harshly, he will retaliate with power.

When your son does what you ask without an argument, thank him. Call attention to it: "Thank you. You did what I asked without an argument. I appreciate that. It shows you are cooperating." As a long-term solution, remember that his need for power can be a positive thing. Look for independence, self-reliance, leadership, and decision-making. When your son shows these qualities, spotlight them. Catch him being good. As with most behavior problems, the positive approach is the best remedy for handling power.

The difference between power and authority lies within you. When you have to confront your kids, emphasize cooperation, not control. Stay calm and rational in spite of the situation. Guard your anger button. Stop and think. Do not react impulsively. Give clear and specific expectations. Explain what will happen if your son chooses not to cooperate. Do not give ultimatums. Focus on influencing your son's motivation.

Here is an example of a parent using power:

"Why can't I go?"

"Because I said so. I'm your mother."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"Everything."

"Well, I'm going anyway."

(Mother gets angry.) "I'm warning you. If you go to that party, you are going to be in big trouble."

"Oh sure. What are you going to do?"

"You just wait and see."

Here is an example of a parent using authority:

"Why can't I go?"

"I don't think it is going to be safe."

"I can handle it."

"There is going to be a lot of drinking at that party. Probably drugs, too. I don't want you

there."

"I'll be okay. You don't have to worry."

"You don't understand. I trust you. That's not the problem. I don't trust some of those other kids. You can't control what they will do."

"Everyone else is going."

"I know you want to go very much. I know you'll be disappointed."

"I want to go."

"Sorry. You can't go. You can do something else. Have some kids over here."

How can you correct your kids and avoid arguments? Verbal corrections are part of good discipline. The purpose of verbal corrections is to teach better decision-making. Here are some suggestions:

1. Begin by validating your relationship: "You are my son and I love you. Nothing you do will ever change that."
2. React appropriately to the size of the problem. If your son misbehaves while shopping, restrict him from shopping: "You can't go shopping with me for two weeks. You will have to stay home. I hope that when you can come with me again, you will behave."
3. Remind your son of previous good behavior: "That's not like you. You are always very well behaved when we go shopping."
4. Separate your son from his behavior. Say, "That behavior is unacceptable." Do not say, "Anyone who would do that is stupid."
5. State your concern: "Your behavior at the store was not acceptable. I was embarrassed."

Do not ask why. Kids misbehave because they choose to misbehave. When you ask why, you are suggesting there may be an excuse: "Why did you do that?" "He told me to do it." Clever kids will search for excuses until they come up with one that you accept. If you don't accept it, you then have a power struggle on your hands.

Realize that an upset child is not a good listener. This is not the time for constructive communication. Wait until he cools off.

Teach your kids to learn from their mistakes rather than suffer from them. Point out things they do wrong by showing them ways to do it better: "You remembered to take out the garbage. Good going. The twist ties need to be a little tighter next time. I'll show you how."

Admit you are wrong once in a while. This is a tough one. Your kids will learn from your example. When you openly admit your mistakes and weaknesses, you are showing them that grown-ups are not perfect. We don't know everything.

Do not carry on about small mistakes; deal with it and then let it go. The purpose of verbal corrections is to have a more cooperative youngster. Misbehaviors and mistakes are normal. You can help your son best by minimizing problems. Do not dwell on them, or rehash the day's problems. Kids cannot build on weaknesses. They can only build on strengths.

When a child feels hurt or angry, he may want to get even. He wants to hurt you. Getting even takes away some of his hurt and anger. Getting even makes kids feel that justice has been served. Revenge is important to kids because of their keen sense of fairness.

Revenge can destroy relationships between parents and kids. This is especially true of teenagers. Some kids embarrass you in front of others. Some kids strike out at something that is special to you. Some kids hurt a younger brother or sister. Some kids run away. Some kids will break a window or break something of value. I once worked with a mother who had a vengeful teenage son. One day she came home to find that he had thrown all of her fine china and crystal glasses into the street. Revenge is not pleasant.

Revenge typically begins when you punish your child for something he believes is unfair. He decides to get even with you by misbehaving again. He pushes your buttons. You get angry and punish again. He strikes back again. The cycle of retaliation begins.

The target of your son's revenge is your feelings. A child who wants to get even wants to hurt you. If he does, he has achieved his payoff. Some parents lack self-confidence about their skills as a parent. Clever kids realize this and take full advantage of the parent's weakness.

Revenge-seeking kids know exactly where to strike. They say things such as, "I hate you. You're a terrible mother." The reason for these remarks is to make you feel hurt. You feel that you have failed your kids. They want you to feel inadequate and guilty.

When you feel inadequate or guilty, you begin to question your own judgments. *Then you begin to give in.* There is nothing a revenge-seeking child would like more than for you to become inconsistent. This is the payoff they are looking for.

Believe in your own abilities, and you will not become the victim of your son's revenge. Support yourself. When your son strikes at your buttons, remain strong. Tell yourself that you are a good parent – you are doing the best you can.

Be positive when disciplining your son. Do not criticize. Be sure that consequences are fair and that they make sense to your son. Consequences should not humiliate or embarrass your son. They should be mild. They should teach your son to make better decisions. Do not use punishment to get even with your son for something he has done that hurts you or makes you angry.

Many parents measure their worthiness by their kid's success: "If I am a good parent, why are my kids so bad?" They feel that if their kids are not perfect, then they must be less than adequate as parents. By believing this, you are making yourself vulnerable to your kids. You become an easy target for any child looking for a button to push.

Think about the reasons you might feel this way. Are you insecure about yourself? Do you feel this way because of your spouse? Is this a leftover belief from your relationship with your parents? Think about your strengths rather than your insecurities. The more you focus on your strengths -- the more confident you will become. Stay calm when your son says, "I hate you." Say, "I'm sorry you feel that way, but I have to do what's right."

Being a good parent does not always mean that you will be your child's best friend. There have been many times when my kids have been angry with me. I do not like how it feels, yet I am not going to give in to their demands. I am not going to criticize myself. Ten years from now they will not remember the time I would not let them watch an R-rated movie. But they will remember my commitment to them. I am going to support myself because I know that what I am doing is best.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:24AM (-07:00)

## I am a counsellor and have recently started getting more calls from...

Sunday, July 20, 2008

Hi Mark, Thank you for your email. I am a parent of three children..however they are all grown up now. I could have done with your course some years ago! I bought your course because I am a counsellor and have recently started getting more calls from parents with difficult to manage teenage children. I think your course may help me with my work as it looks very well structured. I am looking forward to working with it. I hope you have no objection? I will let you know how I am getting on with it..if you are interested! Warm Regards J.

.....

Hi J.,

Good for you!

Many of the members of Online Parent Support are professionals (e.g., teachers, juvenile probation officers, therapists, social workers, etc.) needing assistance in this particular area (i.e., dealing with out-of-control children and adolescents).

And please do let me know how things go.

Thanks,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:25PM (-07:00)

## What do you think about boarding school to get her away from the bu...

Friday, July 25, 2008

hi mark

i didnt call the police until i would have another episode but i let this guy back into my house because he was staying with my sister and my daughter would keep going over there so i said he could come over ...well my daughter and him got the impression that he is going to live here and after a few days i told him he has to go and he got all puffy, and my daughter got an attitude, but he told her he was going to leave in a couple of days

...i told him there wasnt enough room here and i needed to get a handle on my daughter... He got pissed off and said i had more than him to worry about in my daughters life - that i should be concerned about who she would be with when he left and didnt give me a chance to talk to him before he took off....

Well the next day he was at my (supposed to be supportive sisters) and i dont know if he was there all night or not ...she said they all showed up after she got out of court for being evicted, but a boy staying there said he was there when he got there at 8 o clock.

Now my daughter went to her house at 11 she was with a friend whose 20 and finally called me at 4:30 ...anyways they were tooling around with this guy Joe who i kicked out. Then i got my dish network bill and there were adult movies on ppv at the times i was at work, so i called the police and they said they couldnt prove he was watching them with my daughter so they couldnt arrest him ...he was at my sisters house when the police came and my sister almost got arrested for defending him. She was all-supportive for him, and said i am crazy, and said they make mistakes all the time. What do you think about boarding school to get her away from the bullshit ...and im afraid Joe has been molesting my daughter.

I didnt mention that my daughter and Joe denied watching adult movies and my daughter took the policeman aside and told him she didnt want to go home with me causes she was scared id beat her up and that i drink all the time and beat her up ...but he said he couldnt do anything because she had no marks ...then he saw right through her and said she had to come home.

.....

Hi S.,

Below is an email from one of my teenage clients – along with my response. I think this discussion applies to your daughter as well. Maybe you can convince you're her to read it:

**Email from client:**

I'm 16 and in love with a much older man. He's 34 and treats me like gold but I worry about how my parents will react when they learn how old he is. He doesn't look 34, more like 24, so I could lie to them and say he is younger but I just don't know if I should. Advice?

**My response:**

Too many teen girls, some younger than 16, have written in asking me to tell them that their love affair with a much older man is "OK" or normal, and that their parents and all of society are wrong for putting an age limit on love, but I just can't do this. Sure, love doesn't always make sense, but the bottom line on this situation is simple: it is weird.

Take a good look at the kind of relationship we're talking about here. There are nearly two decades of life dividing the two of you and I have to ask, "What on earth can you guys possibly have in common???" I ask this with extreme caution because I, along with every parent reading this answer, fears you will say there is a bond in the worst possible way (yep, I mean sex) and that will force me to retort with words like; statutory rape,



lecherous intentions, borderline pedophilia and ewww gross. Honestly the whole thing makes me want to yell, "Get out of this relationship, date guys closer to your own age and enjoy your youth!" Chances are good he enjoyed his youth, a youth he lived 15 years ago!

I can state with great confidence that most normal well-adjusted 30+ year old men (and more than a few men in their late 20's) would run to the nearest psychologist if they ever seriously thought about having that kind of a relationship with a 16 year old child. Yes, when there are 18 years between you and you live in the 21st century a 16 year old is still a child where any normal 30-something is concerned. Sorry, I know how much teenagers hate being called children but really, you're not an adult by any legal or socially accepted definition of the word so get over the child label and just accept that this 34 year old who treats you like gold probably has some really unsettling demons lurking in his closet and that those demons are just waiting to jump out and scare you back into a reality where teenagers date teenagers, or at least young adults, and 34 year old men don't troll for dates at the local high school.

I wish I could tell you that love conquers all, that age ain't nothing but a number and that men more than twice your age make great life partners and loyal companions, but I can't. Any man that old involved with a girl who is so much younger most likely suffers from one, some, or all of the following personality quirks; he is immature, he is an under-achiever, he has low self esteem, he is a control freak, he is in an early mid-life crisis, he is emotionally confused, he routinely strays from socially accepted norms, he's creepy, etc... When all is said and done the dude is just not right.

Consider the following:

- Teenagers who date older partners had a lower likelihood of consistent contraceptive use. For each year a partner is older than the respondent, the likelihood of always using contraception decreases by 11 percent.
- A recent study found that 6.7 percent of women aged 15-17 have partners six or more years older. The pregnancy rate for this group is 3.7 times as high as the rate for those whose partners are no more than two years older.
- "Teenage girls with older partners are more likely to become pregnant than those with partners closer in age," Planned Parenthood (2004) reported. Further, girls who get pregnant are more likely to have the baby rather than get an abortion if their partners are older.

The characteristics of adult men and the teenage women they date are clearly not ideal. Compared to teenage fathers, adult fathers with teen partners were significantly more likely to have a history of school failure, to smoke, and to have been arrested.

Although studies of adult-teen relationships are sparse, there has been some anecdotal effort to understand them. The National Center for Policy Analysis (2001) suggests four main reasons:

- An older man may be better able to care for a family than a teenager.
- Older men may expect the woman to take responsibility for contraception.
- Teenage women are not as likely to use birth control pills as women a few years older.
- Teenagers may want to become "adults" more quickly to escape an unhappy or deprived home environment.

Older men also carry liabilities that can be closely related to what seem to be their

attributes. Greater independence means greater mobility, which makes it easier for older partners to abandon girlfriends. Greater experience with life increases the odds that older men will have problems with substance abuse, emotional disturbances, criminal behavior, abusiveness, STI and HIV infection, and unresolved past relationships (including ongoing ones). In particular, the HIV infection rate is nine times higher, and gonorrhea and syphilis rates are three times higher, among teen girls than among teen boys, indicating infection of younger women by older male partners (Centers for Disease Control 1990-2002; Sexually Transmitted Disease Control Branch 2002). Older male infection of younger females may be even more pronounced if, as several studies indicate, HIV-positive teenage males also tend to have had adult male partners.

A substantial percentage of younger teenagers who have had sex appear to have been forced. "Some 74% of women who had intercourse before age 14 and 60% of those who had sex before age 15 report having had sex involuntarily," as do 40% of those who had sex by 15, and 25% by 16 also reported, the Guttmacher Institute said. Sex among young adolescents is often involuntary; it frequently involves a man who is substantially older than the woman, which may make it hard for the young woman to resist his approaches and even more difficult for her to insist that contraceptives be used to prevent STDs and pregnancy.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:50AM (-07:00)

## He knows exactly how to push her buttons and she gets so upset she ...

Friday, July 25, 2008

I first want to start out by saying THANK YOU. Although I have only completed the first weeks session I already feel like there is hope for our family.

I have a 15 year old son (will turn 16 in one month) who was diagnosed with ADHD in first grade and diagnosed with Bipolar disorder in the 6th grade. Currently his ADHD is stable with Adderall and his bipolar is being treated with Abilify. I dont think the Abilify is the answer however. I have learned to cope with alot of his 'difficulties" but there are 2 problems that I would call a "emergency."

I also have a 14 year our daughter who is a basket of nerves. My son and her HATE each other. He knows exactly how to push her buttons and she gets so upset she usually just explodes in anger followed by tears. When she is upset there is no reasoning with her until she calms down. I can almost see the "excitement" in my son's eyes when he makes her cry. She is so vulnerable right now. He knows she is very aware of her figure and looks so he is constantly calling her fat (although she is not fat at all). She then comes back at him with retard and why don't we "send him away". I fear what this is doing to her self-esteem and emotional needs.

My second problem is his vulgar language. He is constantly using fowl language on a daily basis usually with no rhyme or reason. He just yells out a long string of bad

language for no reason. He is also very open about sex. He talks about it a lot and constantly makes "sexual noises".

Please believe me when I say, I will continue with your program but right now I feel like 3 weeks is a eternity and I fear our family will fall apart before I get to the end. Do you have any quick advice to help us cope?

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thanks so much for your help!

C.

.....

Hi C.,

*Re: He knows exactly how to push her buttons and she gets so upset she usually just explodes in anger followed by tears.*

You'll want to use the strategies in Sessions 3 & 4 for this. But allow me to elaborate a bit before you rush through those sessions in search of a magic bullet.

Mothers of teenagers or preteenagers may be troubled by the amount of fighting, both verbal and physical, that goes on between their children. This is a common problem in homes with adolescents and one many mothers find particularly difficult and upsetting. One mother said, "They are constantly bickering and yelling. There's no peace in the house anymore. They won't listen to me, and nothing I do seems to have any effect on them. Why do they hate each other so?"

If mothers experience these kinds of problems and concerns, it may help if they try to gain a better understanding of sibling battles and then develop a plan for dealing with them in their home.

In this society, people have the expectation that they will love and get along well with everyone in their family. They always expect to feel positive toward their mothers, brothers, sisters, spouse and children. Most people, however, have at least some times when they don't feel very loving toward each other.

Relationships within a family are close, both emotionally and physically, and very intense. When the television show mothers have been looking forward to is being drowned out by the cheerleading practice in the basement, or when the turkey leg they were saving for a snack is missing from the refrigerator, or when their spouse is gleefully telling a crowd of friends how they dented the car fender, they are not likely to feel loving. Because they are so close, family members have a greater power than anyone else to make other members feel angry, sad, confused -- and loving. This is as true for children and adolescents as it is for adults.

Most siblings have probably been good friends **and** good enemies as they have grown. Having a sibling provides an opportunity to learn to get along with others. Especially when siblings are younger, they may fight bitterly, but they will probably be playing together again an hour later.

For example, a child will say something hateful to a sibling, knowing full well they will still be siblings and friends when the fight is over. If the same thing was said to a playmate outside the family, that playmate might take his or her marbles and go home for good. Thus, children learn from relationships with siblings just how certain words or actions will affect another person without the fear of losing the person's friendship.

Siblings fight for a number of reasons:

- They fight because they are growing up in a competitive society that teaches them that to win is to be better: "I saw it first." "I beat you to the water."
- They fight because they are jealous: "He got a new bike. I didn't. They must love him more than they love me."
- They fight because they want a parent's attention, and the parent has only so much time, attention and patience to give.
- They fight over ordinary teasing which is a way of testing the effects of behavior and words on another person: "He called me..." "But she called me...first."

Children need not weeks or months but years to learn some of the socially approved ways to behave in relationships. Lessons about jealousy, competition, sharing and kindness are difficult to learn, and, indeed, some adults still haven't learned them.

Adolescents fight for the same reasons younger children fight. But adolescents are bigger, louder and better equipped physically and intellectually to hurt and be hurt by words and actions.

From a parent's point of view, they "ought" to be old enough to stop that kind of behavior. What mothers may forget is that adolescents are under pressure from many different directions. Physical and emotional changes and changes in thinking cause pressures, as do changing relationships with mothers and friends.

Teenagers may be concerned about real or imagined problems between their mothers. They feel pressure about the future as adults and about learning to be an adult.

In many ways, teenagers are in greater need than ever for parental love, attention and concern and for a belief that they are as good as their siblings. The adolescent may not recognize these needs or may be too embarrassed to express them verbally, so fighting with siblings as a way to get parental attention may actually increase in adolescence.

In truth, children don't really hate each other, at least not all the time. As children mature and learn to control their energies and anxieties, chances are they will be good friends.

Mothers can recognize the reasons for the fighting and make up their minds that they will not tolerate it. It's not easy to stick to that resolution! However, many mothers have found that sticking to that resolution is the most important factor in bringing peace to their home.

Mothers should tell adolescents that while it's normal to have disagreements, the constant fighting upsets them and they value peace at home. They can say they will no longer be the judge and jury over the siblings' disputes and they will not stand for it! Then, they must stand by the resolution.

One mother reported that every time a fight started, she would say to his adolescents, "You're fighting. I'm leaving." And then she would go out to work in the yard or take a drive or run an errand -- but she simply walked away from the fighting. Another mother

used a similar tactic. When the fighting began, she said, "Call me when it's over." Then she went to her bedroom, slamming the door to emphasize her point. Another parent made his adolescents leave the house when they began fighting.

In each of these cases, the mothers demonstrated that fighting would not get their attention and they would not get involved in the fight. Other mothers have had success in imposing penalties for fighting, such as fines deducted from allowances or a certain amount of grounding for each fighter. These mothers are showing adolescents the cost of fighting is higher than the reward. Whatever tactic mothers use, if they are consistent and stick to their guns, they will almost certainly be successful in reducing the amount of fighting between their children.

Living with fighting adolescent siblings is not pleasant. If mothers can remain calm in the face of battling teenagers, if they can retain their sense of humor and if they put up a determined and united front, they will find the war in their living room will end before long.

As a parent, do you:

- Avoid initiating competition among children?
- Be sure older children are not usually forced to give in to younger ones because "he's little" or "she doesn't know better?"
- Believe there can be something good in sibling fighting?
- Make sure your adolescents realize they are each unique and have a special set of strengths?
- Praise adolescents for being who they are not just for what they can do?
- Realize adolescents and younger children need to be given the right to decide not to share at least some of the time?
- Recognize that each child is different?
- Set aside some time to be alone with each child?
- Talk to the adolescents about their fighting?

**Here's some more tips:**

1. Be available to listen patiently to the problem and control your emotions. Typically mothers have more insight into solving a problem, so give them positive suggestions they can use to work the problem out with their sibling.
2. Don't intervene, but do give them guidance.
3. Don't take sides -- remain neutral.
4. Encourage teenagers to work out issues constructively. Do not allow aggressive behavior such as name calling or hitting.
5. Express to each of your children that you care for each of them as individuals and love them unconditionally.
6. Give them the opportunity to work out their problems on their own.
7. Help enforce the rules by outlining consequences when rules are broken.
8. Help them recognize each other's individuality.
9. Insist that they try to cooperate first.
10. Overcome your own competitive nature.
11. Share an interest in their activities.
12. Spend time with them individually.
13. Teach your children good communication techniques, problem solving skills, and the importance of compromise.

*Re: My second problem is his vulgar language.*

Teens equate swearing to a rite of passage. As parents we can help them learn healthier ways of expressing and developing maturity. The first step to cleaning up teen talk is listening to your teen. When you ascertain in what scenarios and environments he typically swears, you can help him find alternatives to express himself.

Does your son try to project confidence or superiority when he swears? Does he demonstrate anguish, disgust or disdain in himself or peers with cursing? Do you hear your son causally and subconsciously dropping profanities intermittently throughout casual conversations? Knowing the prime times your son swears will help you choose a course of action to clean up the cursing.

Teens frequently opt for strong language as the result of peer pressure. When she asked her fifteen-year-old son James why he selects such strong language to convey his point of view, Julie from Indianapolis was astonished by her teen's straightforward answer. "I talk just like all my friends. We don't mean anything and it's not like adults don't say those things" was James' enlightening response. Although it may appear cavalier, James' explanation is familiarly synonymous with beliefs of his peers.

Realizing that her son and his friends were trying to out-do each other in a ritual game of whose language packs the most shock value, Julie decided she wanted to break her son's habit of vulgarity. "We talked about better ways he could grab his friend's and acquaintance's attention," states Julie "I tried to impress that acting older didn't automatically mean someone would believe he's mature."

Many parents like Julie also find explaining that swearing is not an impressive trait or something that is respected and admired provides clarity. When teens realize that vulgarity or excessive slang has an affect that is ironically opposite than their desired perception of maturity, they are less inclined to taint their vocabulary with swearing. Helping your teen find an intelligent means to express himself, and thus demonstrate true maturity, will both curb swearing and help him achieve his desired goal.

I also suggest parents model the language they expect their teens and tweens to utilize. Reinforcing positive expressions of various emotions lets teens know there's another way to same the same thing. Of course, we're all human and can possibly accidentally or occasionally let a slang word slip. The frustration of stalled traffic or of dropping a heavy can on top of your foot can cause the most restrained individual to use an inappropriate word.

Acknowledging that you're aware you made a regrettable word choice helps teens respect the lessons you're aiming to instill. Demonstrating your remorse for using a curse word offers your teen a glimpse into your humanistic persona.

Additionally helping your teen realize there are consequences to all of his actions -- including swearing -- provides another deterrent. If your teen has to pay a predetermined 'fee' or 'toll' for every profanity used, he may think twice about spending his hard earned allowance on curse words. A curse word cookie jar worked miraculously for Karen's son. "After a few weeks of paying for his language, he decided he's give up swearing. It was just too expensive," Karen happily proclaimed.

Good luck ...stay in touch,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:33AM (-07:00)

## There is some relief that he has gone...

Saturday, July 26, 2008

Hi Sheila,

**== > I've responded throughout your email below:**

Dear Mark,

I followed your parenting programme and found it helpful, especially the poker face scenarios which worked to some degree. The problem has been that I have felt afraid to carry out some of the scenarios which you advise ie the 'take everything away and ground for 3 days' as my son is 17 and quite strong.

**== > Unfortunately, not following the program's goals will make it nearly impossible to be successful with the desired outcomes.**

I think he has an addiction to the computer and he can be on it for up to 14 hours a day. As it is Summer holidays for him (but not for me) he has been on it until 4am in the morning and never goes out. This makes it very difficult for me to get a proper nights sleep because altho he is not noisy his moving around disturbs me and I get up the next morning to do a full days work feeling very tired. When I try to talk to him about it he says that I keep myself up.

When I came back from work 2 weeks ago (after a poor nights sleep) I had lots of work to do on my laptop and was very tired. He had not done the jobs he had agreed to do and there was a mound of washing up in the washing up bowl which was his. I was a bit annoyed (which he hates) but tried to get him to do the jobs there and then so that we could move on. He wanted a chinese take-away and wanted me to drive him to the top of the road to collect it. When I said no, that I had lots of work to do and I was tired but I would give him the money for him to get himself a take away when he had done his jobs he got really annoyed.

**== > What did he do to earn money for Chinese take-away?!**

To cut a long story short, we had a row, I was unable to maintain a poker face, I turned the computer off, which ruined the on line game he was playing, things went from bad to worse, he took my lap top from me. I tried to go to bed and said I was going to bed in a calm (but very tired) voice he turned the sound up on the computer - therefore I was unable to either work or sleep. I refused to leave his room until I got my lap top back ...he started to drag me out of the room etc etc. to cut a long story short, he put a hole in the wall, pushed me over and turned his sound up again, he continued to throw things around the flat and break some of my things. - I called the cops. They took him to his father's house for one night and that is the last I have seen of him.

**== > I'm glad you called the cops. (I was beginning to wonder if you had any backbone.) You sent a very clear message to your son that violence against women is unacceptable.**

It has taken 3 years of this to reach that scenario. I was at my wits end, I cannot seem to handle this on my own as he is too strong for me and NO-One has ever told him to stop. His father always says that I must be doing something to provoke him and will not talk to him and will Never agree with anything I say or back me up. He doesn't want to deal with it. Mediation services say he is crossing the boundary of 'normal teenager behaviour' and we need to talk to him. His father refuses to co-parent. In fact his father hates the cops so much and was furious I called them, that he now is forbidding me from seeing my son saying he needs protecting and he is to move in with him and threatening me with child protection and accusing me of abuse - but mark my son is 17 years old and 5ft 10, I am 5ft 4 and 54kg. I am the one with the bruises and although I have got into some tussles with my son, I have never used physical force to punish or control him!!! It is ludicrous.

**== > It sounds like you have 2 teenagers to deal with – your son AND your husband. I'm sorry to hear that your husband is a jerk.**

However this brings me to my final point and question...

I feel that my son will not learn a good lesson from this. He will, like his father, blame me and I have come to the point where I have been unhappy with him living with me for some time and cannot see a way forward if he came back.

**== > This is where I thought we were going with this conversation – and I am glad to see that you are finally getting some insight into what YOU really need to do with this dilemma. I'll read on...**

I love my son desperately and miss him terribly, but there is some relief that he has gone, which I feel guilty about.

**== > HOLD IT! Re: "feeling guilty"—**

**This is why you got so deep into this problem to begin with – that is, your "relationship" with your son was more important to *you* than it was to *him*; you took on WAY too much responsibility for that relationship. Of course you'll always love him, but to AVOID setting healthy boundaries in order to protect your physical and mental health would be insane.**

I feel at this moment in time I just dont want to see either him or his father for a very long time - because there will be too much anger from him that is not being addressed by him. Am I doing the right thing?

**== > Absolutely! How does it feel to have an "awakening"?**

I know you say never give up but I have tried everything under the sun from parenting classes to mediation and nothing works because I am the only one doing anything.

**== > I don't see your need for respite as "giving up" – rather, I see it as you finally realizing that *if you don't take care of you – nobody else will*.**

The other two just will not play ball... I have tried to be a good mum and things used to be wonderful but as my boy has got older there has been a lack of co-parenting and myself and his dad, have argued around him and have completely different ideas about parenting. He must be confused and there has been a lack of boundaries as we both say



different things. I feel I just need to be out of the picture and hope some day that he might realise all the things I tried to do for him and the sacrifices I made.....Is there anything you could suggest that I could do or should I just leave it???

== > I'd leave it -- with one huge caveat:

**When your son wants to come back to live with you because he and his father have had a meltdown, your temptation will be to welcome him with open arms. BUT, what you will be doing is setting the whole unfortunate thing in motion again.**

You have described over-indulgent parenting on your part throughout this email. If you take your son back at some point – but continue to parent using an over-indulgent parenting style, your son will eat you for lunch ...then spit you out.

Mark

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:16AM (-07:00)

## What is considered discipline and what is considered punishing?

Saturday, July 26, 2008

Mark-

I am on week 3, and have found your online counseling a huge help to our family and situation. I hope that if we follow this, that we will see improvements with our 7-year-old daughter that has gotten out of control at home. She has been diagnosed ADHD and ODD. Every doc has recommended medications for her. Mainly I am sure because of school and the fact that she does have problems with socialization at school. She is aggressive with kids, but a friendly aggressive like hugs and such. She has a heart of gold, and wants to do good, but she doesn't have the tools she needs in order to be constructive.

I am wondering what is the difference between discipline vs punishing? What I mean is, what is considered discipline and what is considered punishing?

Thank you,

J.

.....

Hi J.,

**Discipline is:**

- "Time-outs" that are open-ended and governed by the child's readiness to gain self-control

- Acknowledging or rewarding efforts and good behavior
- Consistent, firm guidance
- Directed at the child's behavior, never the child
- Giving children positive alternatives
- Listening and modeling
- Logical consequences that are directly related to the misbehavior
- **Physically and verbally non-violent**
- **Positive, respectful**
- Re-directing and selectively "ignoring" minor misbehavior
- Reflection and verbal give-and-take communication
- Teaching children to internalize self-discipline
- Teaching empathy and healthy remorse by showing it
- Understanding individual abilities, needs, circumstances and developmental stages
- Using mistakes as learning opportunities
- When children follow rules because they are discussed and agreed upon
- When children must make restitution when their behavior negatively affects someone else

**Punishment is:**

- "Time-outs" that banish a child for a set amount of time governed by the adult
- Being told only what NOT to do
- Children are punished for hurting others, rather than shown how to make restitution
- Consequences that are unrelated and illogical to the misbehavior
- Constantly reprimanding children for minor infractions causing them to tune-out
- **Controlling, shaming**
- Criticizing the child, rather than the child's behavior
- Forcing children to comply with illogical rules "just because you said so"
- Inappropriate to the child's developmental stage of life
- Individual circumstances, abilities and needs not taken into consideration
- **Negative and disrespectful of the child**
- **Physically and verbally violent and aggressive**
- Reacting to rather than responding to misbehavior
- **Sarcastic**
- Teaching children to be controlled by a source outside of themselves
- Teaching children to behave only when they will get caught doing otherwise
- When children follow rules because they are threatened or bribed

Discipline is guidance. When we guide children toward positive behavior and learning, we are promoting a healthy attitude. Positive guidance encourages a child to think before he acts. Positive guidance promotes self-control. Different styles of discipline produce results that are different. Discipline requires thought, planning, and patience.

Punishment, on the other hand, is usually hitting, spanking, or any type of control behavior. Basically there are four kinds of punishment:

- **Penalizing the child with consequences that do not fit the crime:** Example: "Because you told a lie, you can't have your allowance."
- **Physical:** Slapping, spanking, switching, paddling, using a belt or hair brush, and so on.
- **With words:** Shaming, ridiculing, or using cruel words.

**Punishment is usually used because:**

- It vents adult frustration

- It's quick and easy
- Parents don't know other methods
- Punishment asserts adult power

Punishment does not promote self discipline. It only stops misbehavior for that moment. Punishment may fulfill a short-term goal, but it actually interferes with the accomplishment of your long-term goal of self control.

**The consequences for children include the following lessons:**

- It is okay to hit people who are smaller than you are.
- It is right to hit those you are closest to.
- Those who love you the most are also those who hit you.
- Violence is okay when other things don't work.

Tips—

- Address the situation; do not judge the child. This is important because diminished self-esteem leads to insecurity, even hostility.
- Be firm. Clearly and firmly state that the child does what needs to be done. Speak in a tone that lets your child know you mean what you say and you expect the child to do it. It doesn't mean yelling or threatening. Being firm works for any age child and for many situations.
- Be sure children know these limits. Be consistent.
- Build self-esteem and respect. Avoid words that reduce self-esteem.
- Guide through consequences. If a child leaves his toys outside and the toys are stolen or damaged--no toys.
- Keep discipline positive. Tell children what to do instead of what not to do.
- Keep your cool. Listen calmly to your child's explanation of the problem; talk about ways to deal with it. Come to a solution that's agreeable to you and the child--this helps the child learn to be responsible for his behavior.
- Plan ahead. Prevent misbehavior by eliminating situations that spell trouble. For example, make sure children have been fed and are rested before going to the grocery store.
- Set clear and safe limits.
- Teach by example. Be a good example. If you hit children for hitting others, they won't understand why they can't hit.
- When you discipline, explain why.

Sorry for all the bullet points. It makes it a bit impersonal, but also cuts down on time spent typing.

Thanks for the question,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:55AM (-07:00)

# We are thinking we need to jump the chain of command and talk to th...

Saturday, July 26, 2008

Hi Mark,

It's been awhile since I last wrote to you. Your help thus far has been wonderful and so appreciated.

When Last I wrote, Our oldest son (P\_\_\_ 21) was still living at home, and our younger son (J\_\_\_ 16) was having school problems and more.

P\_\_\_ is now living in Flagstaff, working and taking college classes at Yavapai Community (on line) and a Summer Biology class at Coconino Community in Flag. He is planning to apply for the nursing program and getting his pre req classed done.

J\_\_\_ is doing better, but we have some hurdles yet to overcome. As last school year was drawing to a close, he was failing two classes. We had allowed him to get his drivers license but was only able to drive with us in the car as we were looking into insurance et. He was told that if he did not pass all classes, he would only be allowed to drive to and from work this Summer. He really did not believe us until the final two weeks of school and then kicked into gear and managed to pass all classes.

So as P\_\_\_'s move out date was close in Early June and J\_\_\_ was out of school and ready to start driving, My Dad had a serious Fall with head Trauma in Phx. I was having a relapse of my MS (actually been in relapse since last Summer but was hoping it would go back into it's box again) I already had an appt with my Neuro at Barrows set up that week and had already had my MRI's completed. M\_\_\_ (husband) and I headed down to Phx, leaving J\_\_\_ In charge of the dogs and puppies. My Dad was in ICU for almost 3 weeks. I stayed down there with my Mom, spending our days and evenings at the hospital, I had a 3 day infusion of Steroids to tamp down my M.S. and decided to start a new Therapy Med, Tysabri, as my MS had progressed alot over the past year.

My Dad had to be moved to Hospice, where he passed away on June 21st. Then we had to plan, make and proceed with his arrangements and his memorial was on June 27th.

As you can imagine, we were unable to get insurance arrangements made at that time for J\_\_\_ to be able to drive. He was at times understanding and other times, felt we were dragging our feet.... Over all J\_\_\_ did a good job of holding down the fort while I was gone but did very little once Mike came home from work etc.

J\_\_\_ is now driving and we are happy for that as is he. Next will be getting a job and hopefully a successful coming year. He will be a Junior this year.

P\_\_\_ is doing well in Flagstaff so far and liking having his own apt. Not too sure how things will continue to progress as he is still in the mind set of getting financial aid or loans to support himself and go to school full time. We are open to other options, but are waiting to see how he figures things out on his own and talk other options when and if the time comes. I will most likely be seeking your advise on this in the near future.

I'm sorry for the long e-mail.... But here is where we are now.

Focusing on J\_\_\_\_. We have made him responsible for 1/3 of his insurance and totally responsible for his cell phone... this alone will lead to his need for a job, so we are comfortable with that aspect of his life at this point.

We went to his school for registration yesterday. J\_\_\_\_ is not strong in Math abilities and last year was failing Geometry and after much fighting with the school, was put in Math fundamentals. He has to have one more math credit to graduate. The schools stance is that he has to take Geometry and won't budge at this point. He has passed his AIMS test in Math, although he failed the algebra and Geometry portion, has met the state requirement to graduate. To make matters tougher... his school has adopted a grading scale that makes C the lowest passing grade.

His school Councilor and I have a real conflict and a meeting with her, always turns out with her treating me like an irresponsible Parent that only wants to give J\_\_\_\_ the easy road thru school. They want to see him "challenged" ... little do they understand that he is challenged and what we want is to see him succeed and graduate and if he needs higher math in the future, he will at that time be more mature and focused to achieve it. At this point he wants to be a Fireman and wants to start taking his fire science classes next year while he is finishing up high school.

We have seen much improvement in his attitude (not perfect) and plan to continue to follow your advise that school is his job and hold to the consequences that if he fails classes, his driving will be restricted to work transport only. I do feel that it is up to me to help in getting his schedule worked out to make this achievable, am I wrong here?

I would like to hear your advice before I proceed with the school. We are thinking we need to jump the chain of command and talk to the Superintendent, who is a reasonable man VS the principal who is not.

We want J\_\_\_\_ to succeed and his schedule minus the Geometry is going to be a real challenge as he will be working also. They do offer a Business Math class but say the pre reqs are Algebra and Geometry and not an easy class but I think will offer at least math that is geared towards life skills that he will need.

I'm sorry if I have rambled on... I look forward to hearing from you. If all this sounds jumbled, that is just how life is feeling for me :)

Thank you Mark,

A.

Visit our website at <http://cavalier-king-charles-spaniel-puppies.com>

.....

Hi A.,

*Re: I do feel that it is up to me to help in getting his schedule worked out to make this achievable, am I wrong here?*

Wrong? Probably not. Will you be effective? Probably not. So the question now becomes, "How much time and energy do you put into this?"

If he has met the state requirement to graduate, then you may want to let go of it.

You would want me to be honest here – so I will. This sounds too much like you taking on too much responsibility, which has probably contributed to the problem at some level.

Bottom line: I think your son received a natural consequence for not going the extra mile (e.g., not getting a tutor, doing extra homework, etc.). If he wants it -- he'll get it!

You can go to the Superintendent and try to work that angle, but this may send the wrong message to your son (e.g., "If you don't get what you want, then play politics and try to manipulate the system").

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:17AM (-07:00)

## Should we punish my son?

Saturday, July 26, 2008

Hello,

I recently started your online program and am so glad I found it!

I have a question involving lying that cannot be proven. I am 99% sure my 14 yr old son did these things but I have no physical proof that he specifically is the one that did it. My husband says without that proof we cannot punish him. I disagree, but I am afraid it may cause him to resent me on that 1% chance he is not lying.

Issue 1: porn downloaded on my computer during 1 hour while I was away. I have a spyware program that showed this, and he says Limewire auto downloads stuff and he didn't do it.

Issue 2: 30 presc pills of mine are missing and he has been caught with other drugs/alcohol previously.

Besides my husband and myself, the only person in the household is my 19 yr old daughter and we have no reason to believe she would have done either of these things as #1 she has her own computer, and #2 she has not had problems with this kind of thing and #3 we can always tell if she lies and she says she didn't do these things.

Should we punish my son?

Thank you,

T.

.....  
Hi T.,

Your husband is right. If you don't have proof, you shouldn't issue a consequence – BUT you should safeguard your prescription meds and limit/monitor use of the computer.

As with ALL parents, there will come a time when you will catch your teen in a lie. It may be about something small, like telling you they have no homework when they are actually behind in school, or it could be something as big as saying they are spending the night at friends and staying out all night. When a teen gets away with a small lie, they tend to move onto bigger lies, so it's important to not let them get away with even the first small lie. It's about setting boundaries and using discipline to educate your child as to what you will not put up with, and drawing clear expectations of their behavior.

It's harder than it looks. You found out, you talked to them, you feel hurt and betrayed, but you pass it off as a youthful indiscretion and let it pass. They promise not to do it again, but the consequences did not match the action, and therefore they will continue to test and push to see how far they can get. Your job is to set clear expectations with your teen about lying, and set clear consequences.

This is a natural part of youth development, seeing how much they can get away with. But constant lying can lead to bigger problems, such as petty theft. So stay strong, set clear boundaries, and let the discipline (notice the word used here is discipline and not punishment) fit the lie.

How can you tell if your teen is lying to you in the first place? Listed below are a few ways professionals use to spot when someone is telling a lie:

1. If your teen avoids looking at you when telling you a story or looks at you too long without blinking, this is an indication that he/she may be lying. People tend not to look at the person they are lying to in the eye when lying, unless they know this fact and then they tend to look at you for too long. If you talk to your teen on a regular basis, you'll see a deviation in how he/she behaves while communicating to you during a lie.
1. Many times when a person lies, they look down. When a person tells you what happened and it's the truth, they tend to look up and 'see' the event happening as it did. But when someone is using their creativity to 'make up' what happened, they look down.
1. People who are lying fidget. But this is also a sign of stress, so don't go by this alone. Ask to check up on the story.
1. People who are lying touch their face and mouth. This type of body language is something that happens often when someone is lying. It isn't easy to pick up until you know to look for it.
1. Teens who are lying avoid details, or have well practiced details, and change the story in the second telling. Again, this doesn't happen as often with highly intelligent teens. Ask to check up on the story and see how he/she reacts.
1. The faster you get over the shock that your teen will lie to you, the better you will be at spotting when he/she is lying. Your teen will not be trying to hurt you by lying, so try not to emotionally attach yourself to that action.
1. There will be a pause. This one would tell me something is wrong when I had a teen on the phone. If I ask for details on what he/she was doing, there is always a pause

before the answer. It's time for the teen to make something up. This happens face to face too.

1. When someone lies, they get defensive and will not be happy if you chose to check-up on their story. It has been my experience when a teen is not lying, they offer ways for you to check up by giving you the phone numbers or names you need. They may be a little insulted – I fall back and regroup later – but they aren't defensive. Being defensive and pitching a fit when asked to help you check the story is a sure sign something is amiss and the teen is lying.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:32AM (-07:00)

## We have told him come next month he is paying for his bills...

Saturday, July 26, 2008

Hi Mark

Well our son turns 18 this week and worked 10 days this summer in a temporary position. He now is not working as he has money. He says he will find work soon but does not actually look, just talks about it.

Of course we have told him come next month he is paying for his bills. This does not seem to jar him, in fact, the more we encourage (he calls it nagging) to get work, the more he pulls back (control).

So, he will get money for his birthday (grandparents) and he says he will use this to pay us back and pay for his cell phone etc. Do you think this is acceptable as the money is a gift, intended for him to buy something for himself? I told him the bills he has should be paid with work money and not gift money. (We are not planning on giving him any unearned money).

Please advise of your thoughts on this.

PS

Things are slowly getting better with the program. Thank-you.

~SS~

.....

Hi S.,

Re: *Do you think this is acceptable as the money is a gift, intended for him to buy something for himself?*

Receiving money as a gift from grandparents on one's birthday is certainly acceptable.



And if he wants to pay bills with that money – fine. However, his bills will continue to come in – but his birthday money will eventually run out.

The larger issue here seems to be as follows: What is he doing to prepare for living away from the nest.

The latest parenting challenge is dealing with emerging adults who have no intention of leaving the nest. Many 18- to 25-year-olds either return home after college or they've never even left home. The media refers to them as "Boomerang Kids." Parents are worried that their kids won't leave home.

This new phenomenon is highlighted in the movie *Failure to Launch*. Matthew McConaughey plays Tripp, 30-something bachelor whose parents want him out of the house. They've hired Paula (Sarah Jessica Parker), an interventionist, to help him move out. Paula has a track record of successfully boosting men's self-confidence to cause them to want to be independent.

Interestingly, this story line is not as far-fetched as it may seem. Young adults are indeed becoming more difficult to coax out of their comfy childhood homes.

Since the '70s, the number of 24-year-olds still living at home has nearly doubled! Here are the top 4 factors contributing to this change:

#### 1. They Are Unprepared

They are overwhelmed or unmotivated to live independently. They would rather play it safe by occupying the family home, playing computer games and delivering pizza.

These kids often grow up living the life of the privileged. Here, well-meaning parents provide their children with all the amenities congruent with an affluent lifestyle. The parents are focused on doing more for their children than what their parents did for them – at the expense of keeping them dependent. Kids don't move out because they've got it made!

When your financial generosity isn't combined with teaching kids how to become self-sufficient at an early age, we cannot expect them to automatically possess adequate life skills when they reach legal adulthood. How will they gain the skills to confidently live their own life when they haven't had the opportunity to do things for themselves?

#### 2. They Are Cautious or Clueless

They are committed, but unsure how to discover their ideal career path. They approach college with the same trial and error mindset their parents had only to find out that it no longer prepares them for today's competitive world.

Parents do their kids a disservice by waiting until they are 17 or 18 before initiating career-related discussions. In our dynamic society where change is a daily diet, this is much too late! It's best to start young, at age 13. This stage of development is the perfect time to begin connecting the dots between what they love to do and possible career options. It can take years to prepare for the perfect career. Beginning early will help teens maximize their opportunities in high school and make college a much better investment.

### 3. They Have Personal Problems

They don't have effective life coping skills, have failed relationships or are grieving some other loss or wrestling with a challenging life event.

In *Failure to Launch*, we learn that Tripp's parents indulged him largely because the woman he loved died, and he hasn't gotten over his loss. When Tripp falls in love with Paula – the new girl of his dreams – his self-sabotaging habit of dumping a girl before she can get too close gets reactivated. Finally, his friends intervene and Tripp eventually faces his demons, to everyone's delight.

If your teen is struggling emotionally, don't make the mistake of thinking it will somehow magically get better without an intervention. Tough love requires that you insist your adolescent get professional help so that he or she can move forward. If you don't know how to have that kind of conversation, consider getting help from a parenting expert.

### 4. They Have Mounting Debt

They've accumulated significant credit card debt and moving back in with their parents is a way to pay it off. According to the National Credit Card Research Foundation, 55 percent of students ages 16 to 22 have at least one credit card. If your teen falls into this group, make sure you monitor spending together online. Helping your teen understand how to budget and manage credit cards will be important for handling a household budget in the future.

Kids can't learn to manage money if they don't have any or if parents always pay for everything. If your offspring moves back home, I recommend you charge a nominal amount for room and board. As an adult member of your household, it's important for your young adult to contribute to household chores and expenses.

If the purpose of your child's return home is to pay off bills or a college loan, have a realistic plan and stick to the plan to make sure your young adult moves out of the house.

**Determine Goals and Stick to Them**— Most parents enjoy having their children visit and will consider offering some short-term help. However, indulging an adult child's inaction does not help your son begin his own life. If your child defaults on your agreement, be willing to enforce consequences to help him launch into responsible adulthood.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:05AM (-07:00)

## Do I - or do I not - put her on birth control?

Monday, July 28, 2008

My daughter has become sexually active with "her boyfriend". She was sneaking out on the nights my husband works. We have had one pregnancy scare already. Do I - or do I not - put her on birth control? We are currently on Week 2 of your program.

.....

YES! Just do it. Wherever you stand on pre-marital sex, you need to address the reality of your daughter engaging in sexual activity and it's consequences. Be honest with your daughter starting first with the science of how the various forms of birth control work. Don't forget to address all those myths floating around. You want to make sure your daughter has heard it from you before she hears it in the locker room. She is more likely to value your advice if you offer it freely. It's okay to be uncomfortable. It's not okay to hide your head in the sand.

Parents are often in denial ...they may fervently want children to delay sexual activity, but if you know for a fact that your daughter is having sex, then the responsible thing to do is to warn her about sexually transmitted diseases and help prevent her from getting pregnant.

Mark

.....

Thank you. We struggled with the "giving her permission" part of it. Considering the cost, is it one of those things she has to "earn"? In other words, should she pay for it with her "chore" allowance?

Also, she has become interested in piercing and tattooing to the point of piercing her own lip with a safety pin and is now engaging in trying to create her own tattoo gun and cutting into her skin. The lip piercing she did a few months ago and we were "secretly" hoping it would infect and we would have to take her but she read up on how to take care of it, too. We discovered last night that she was on the internet finding directions on self-tattooing. The type that prisoners do. My husband found the paperwork on a couch in the living room. We almost think she wanted us to find it.

I monitor her IM and limit it as well. I found she shared this tattooing info with "her 15 year old boyfriend" and was hiding her initial markings with a wristband. I left for work this morning, told my husband about it (who is now home sleeping). He is thankfully on vacation this week but we are both a bit distraught over this. What do you recommend for how we handle this today?

You are a godsend right now. Thank you.

.....

Re: ...should she pay for it with her "chore" allowance?

I'd have her pay half. Her willingness to go along with the whole birth control thing is worth much more than the cost of a month's worth of pills.

Re: tattooing. If she's going to get a tattoo, she really should consider having it done professionally.

Professional studios usually take pride in their cleanliness. Here are some things to check for:

- Make sure the tattoo studio has an **autoclave** (a device that uses steam, pressure, and heat for sterilization). You should be allowed to watch as equipment is sterilized in the autoclave.
- Check that the tattoo artist is a **licensed practitioner**. If so, the tattoo artist should be able to provide you with references.
- Be sure that the tattoo studio follows the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's **Universal Precautions**. These are regulations that outline procedures to be followed when dealing with bodily fluids (in this case, blood).

Tattoos and piercings really fall into the "pick-your-battles-carefully" category. Most parents have bigger fish to fry (i.e., more serious problems to address).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:47AM (-07:00)

## The biggest problem that we are having is trust...

Monday, July 28, 2008

Dear Mark,

I've been listening and reading the program for four weeks, and doing the assignments. I have two daughters 18 and 16. This has been the most trying summer of my life. My husband has not been involved for most of their lives, although we are together. I am left to do all the parenting myself. The biggest problem that we are having is trust. I have caught my older daughter smoking, drinking, taking drugs, sneaking out of the house, stealing and lying to cover it up. It has now affected my younger daughter, who has decided to "gang up" against me.

My husband also blames me, and tells me to back off. Every time I do that, the same problems or others arise. I have issued the 3-day discipline, and the day it was lifted, there was another incident. This happened 3 times. My daughter was told no smoking. Is this something I can enforce? I told her I know that I can't stop her from smoking, but I can insist that it doesn't happen on my property. I also told her that when I find things like lighters, I'm going to assume that they are hers, and that she is smoking. I also told her no smoking in her car. She paid for the car, but it is in my husband's name. She "swears" that she is not smoking, but I am still finding lighters, and her car stinks. The stories that she tells me are very hard to believe. I told her that because of her track record of lying to cover things up, I'm having a hard time believing her. My younger daughter backs her up with every story.

They both resent that I don't trust her, but my gut feeling is that they are both lying. Her car has been limited to work only until she pays off the money she owes us from stealing. My husband allowed her to take the car to the beach the other day. I have begged him to also listen to the program, and he is always too busy, and basically doesn't care. I feel this is one of the main reasons why we are in this situation, because there is no unity. I really want this problem solved!

and has started taking lexapro. I was against this at first, but am willing to try to see if she really is unable to control her emotions. I have always had a close relationship with both daughters, and have done most of the things that you suggest, before I started this program.

My older daughter's plans of living away at college were taken away when she didn't get the cheerleading scholarship that she was hoping for. When that fell through, we agreed to a year of community college and living at home was best for her, until she pulled up her grades, and matured a little. (She was not self-reliant enough to live away without answering to someone ie. coach, and also a network of friends). Instead of maturing this year, she regressed and rebelled, blaming me for not allowing her to live away.

My husband lost his job, and I couldn't pay for her to live away without the scholarship. She was only 17, and not eligible for a loan without my cosigning. She still cannot get a loan until 21 without our cosigning. I told her that living away at school is not out of the question, but it is a privilege that needs to be earned. Please advise? Sorry so detailed.

.....

Hi M.,

Re: *My daughter was told no smoking. Is this something I can enforce?*

You will not be able to stop her from smoking. Pick your battles carefully - and this is not a battle you should fight. In fact, the more you worry about it or lecture her, the more she will smoke! But you can stop her from smoking on YOUR property. Here's what you can say to your daughter:

*"I can't keep you from damaging your health by smoking. But it's your health - not mine! However, I don't want you smoking in my house or anywhere on my property. If you choose to smoke on my property, you'll choose the consequence, which is grounding for 3 days without privileges (e.g., use of phone, T.V., computer, etc.)."*

If your daughter smokes on the property, follow through with the consequence.

Re: *I have begged him to also listen to the program, and he is always too busy, and basically doesn't care.*

A weaker plan supported by both parents is much better than a stronger plan supported by only one.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:02AM (-07:00)

## He doesn't seem interested in any type of "plan"...

Monday, July 28, 2008

Mark,

Thanks. Any tips on getting my husband to support ANY consistent plan? He doesn't seem interested in any type of "plan". He just criticizes me when one or both of my daughters get in trouble. He's seldom at home. He rarely talks to them, except to criticize them, usually to me. I know it's important for him to be involved, but again, I can't force him either. I feel very frustrated. Also, I have told them to keep their facebook's clean. This is where I find out most of the stuff that they are doing. How should these websites be handled. I can't seem to block the site without blocking the whole internet. This is stuff that the "whole world" can see. I told them I don't want anything about drug use or foul language on them. How do I control this? The computer is in the kitchen, but their sites have passwords?

M.

.....

We use PC Tattletale at our house. We can pretty much control everything with this software: **PC Tattletale**.

*Re: Any tips on getting my husband to support ANY consistent plan?*

One lady (going through the same thing with her husband) played the audio CDs in the car whenever the two of them were out and about. She used the "captive audience" approach. (Sneaky!)

You can get the CDs here if you want: **Audio CDs**.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:41AM (-07:00)

## I had taken away my son's computer game and nintendo privileges 'un...

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Thank you so much for that Mark. I understand. I'm definitely working the program, not jumping ahead, and believe me I know from experience there is no magic bullet. I'm into week 2 now and have read/watched both articles. But I do need clarification on how to proceed with this week's assignments, if that's ok:

So do you mean you think I should just forget school issues and the moment and let them deal with it in order to just focus on the program at home? For example, before I started the program I had taken away my son's computer game and nintendo privileges 'until things improved at school' (which I know is a bit vague). Should I therefore scrap that consequence in order to just focus on the saying yes/say no practice?

Kind regards

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Yes.

Start with a clean slate. ONLY implement session #1 assignments during week #1 ...session #2 assignments during week #2 ...and so on.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:20AM (-07:00)

## How do we motivate him to work?

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Hi Mark

Thank you for your response.

I am so glad I found your web site, my husband and I have just started reading it and we are putting assignment 1 into place this week. I am actually a stepmother to my husband's eldest boy (16yrs old) that we have been having terrible trouble with for many years but in the last 2 months things have become quite horrendous. To help you with the overall picture, his two brothers (12yrs & 15yrs) and himself live with us week about, 1 week with his mother and the other week with us and my 11yr daughter lives with us full time.

He is a very bright boy, but school just didn't interest him and was getting into trouble, didn't want to go, wouldn't do any work, unmotivated and incredibly addicted to computer games – exactly what you have outlined in the start of your web site, it explained so much. It's the old scenario his Dad felt sorry for his kids after the divorce and indulged them way too much, but he did the best he could at the time. He has since left school around 2 months ago, wants to go into the Police Force when he is 21 because in Australia to get into the Police Force you need to finish your Higher School Certificate or have a trade or certificate 3 in some sort of profession.

He is currently working part-time at McDonalds and some weeks only getting 1 shift a week and he feels this is enough and eventually McDonalds will give him a management role which will help get into the Police Force. But he would sit around all day, meet his friends after school and not look for another job. His father has offered him help with his resume, he has offered to take him to different organizations to find work. But he refuses to go. We have taken the internet off him altogether in both houses, because that would encourage him to stay home play computer games and not look for a job.

Our question to you is how do we motivate him to work?

Look forward to your reply.

M.

.....

Hi M.,

There are many reasons why teenagers lack motivation -- to do what moms and dads want them to do. (You'll notice they don't lack motivation to do what they want to do -- talk on the phone, skateboard, shop, party, etc.) For now, I'll mention just a few:

1. Parents need to be kind and firm while holding teenagers accountable -- once they have agreed upon a plan. It is just as easy to be kind while reminding as it is to be unkind -- actually it is easier, because everyone feels better and the job gets done without a power struggle.
1. Kids aren't allowed to explore the relevance for themselves. They are "told", but they don't explore. How many moms and dads "tell" their kids what happened, what caused it to happen, how they should feel about it, and what they should do about it? It is much more effective to ask what and how questions.
1. Moms and dads are more interested in short term results than long-range results. For example, I'll make you do your homework now - even if it means you will never do your best because you are too busy rebelling.
1. Moms and dads don't allow their kids to learn from failure -- an excellent motivator. One of the best ways to help kids learn to be responsible (motivated) is to be consciously irresponsible. Allow them to fail and then be empathetic and help them explore what happened, how they feel about it, what they learned from it, and what they could do in the future if they want another outcome.
1. Moms and dads don't help kids learn time management skills through involving them in the creation of routine charts. The key word is "involving them."
1. Moms and dads don't know how to say, "I love you, and the answer is no."
1. Moms and dads don't teach their kids problem-solving skills through family meetings and individual barnstorming sessions.
1. Moms and dads expect teenagers to "remember to do their chores" as though it were an indicator of responsibility. Most responsible adults were not necessarily responsible teenagers. Even though teenagers are "more" motivated to follow a plan they have helped create, they will still forget because it is not high on their list of priorities. This does not mean they are irresponsible. It means they are teenagers. A friendly reminder doesn't have to be a big deal. Use your sense of humor and remind with your mouth shut. Point, use charades, or write a note. If you have to say something, ask, "What did we agree to that you have forgotten?"
1. Moms and dads give their kids too many things and then wonder why they fail to be appreciative -- and instead just want more, more, and more.
1. Moms and dads nag and invite resistance.
1. Regarding motivation to do chores, work, etc.: Again teenagers are too often "told" instead of "invited to brainstorm" and come up with a solution that works for everyone. Teenagers are much more motivated to follow a plan they have helped create.
1. Teenagers feel "conditionally loved" -- "I'm okay only if I live up to your expectations." This hurts and they get revenge by failing to meet parental



expectations.  
Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:55AM (-07:00)

## She was released from the Singapore Girls Home, a juvenile prison o...

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

Dear Mark,

I read with interest your parenting book, we are one of those parents that tried everything including the Beyond Parental Control juvenile help in Singapore.

Our daughter has a history of running away as soon as she does not get her way, the last time for 25 days, with the threat of killing herself and or over dose on drugs.

We finally put her in a very disciplined structured boarding school in Malaysia. It is her 16th birthday on Saturday, and she needs permission to go out.

As this is a privilege she has not earned, nor the trust, we refused the permission. The threats of running away and killing herself were howling in the phone.

I am going thru your book, as to be ready for her first home leave, 2 weeks from now, and the problems are back, before we can implement anything. As soon as she gets a negative answer or a way to earn a privilege - she runs away, does not care if she has no bed, food, as long as she can decide herself how to spend her time.

She was released from the Singapore Girls Home, a juvenile prison on the 22nd after 1 months stay. Tears and promises made us decide to take her out of it and into a boarding school.

This is the 5th school in which we hope she can finish secondary 3. She got expelled from the others due to bad behavior.

Any advice? If you need more info, we will gladly supply.

Many thanks

Mr. & Mrs. G.

.....

Mr. & Mrs. G.,

First of all, be sure to watch ALL the Instructional Videos in the online version of the eBook. If you only read the printable version of the eBook, you'll only get about 40% of the total material.

The advice I have is simple and straightforward:

When she returns home, implement session #1 during the first week ...session #2 during the second week ...and so on. If she chooses to ignore your house rules, then she will also choose to continue her involvement in the Juvenile Justice system. There's no way around this.

If you can't control your daughter – the world WILL control her. Let her decide which controlling entity she wants to answer to. It's not a question of whether or not she will be controlled, rather it's a question of who will do the controlling – parents or the law. Again – let her decide which. Then, whatever her decision – let go of the outcome. (Easier said than done – but you have no other choice as I see it.)

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:54AM (-07:00)

I can see already that with our "over parenting & over indulgin...

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Hi Mark,

Your web site has given me and my partner a great deal of hope with our daughter. She is 12 but I can see already that with our "over parenting & over indulging" that it hasn't done Scarlett any favours at all.

I thought that one of the key areas you wrote about was very interesting to me, was the topic that as parents you shouldn't feel guilty for trying your very best & to take time out to look after yourself. I constantly feel guilty for being a working mum etc etc. My mother was very strict and i was afraid that i was treating Scarlett the same as i was quiet frightened of her as a child and didn't want to make Scarls feel the same ever. I guess I have again over done the indulging side.

A thing that makes me laugh to myself is that I teach in a further education college here in the UK and I can get my kids at work to literally eat out of my hand and are as good as gold. Even the ones it ADHD etc but my very own 12 year old girl well thats another matter!

I love the site and have read the material over and over. I will stick to the 4 weeks with vivid interest, and i can see how the techniques you promote would help me in my job as a lecturer too.

Keep the good work, with kind regards

J.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:06AM (-07:00)

## I have finally done it!

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Hi Mark, It has taken longer than necessary for me to complete this program, but I have finally done it! During these past few weeks, my husband and I have been implementing many steps, successfully. Our son, Daniel, has been completing his weekly chores with not much complaint. The times that he forgets, or for some reason doesn't complete the chores, we deduct from his allowance. There haven't been any big blow ups around here, and the few irritable times we've had have been much less stressful. Once school begins in a couple of weeks, we might have some tense times, but I do feel prepared for them now. Also, I re-took the quiz; the first time I scored in the 80s, today I scored a 56. I really do thank you very, very much. This is a great program and I will be re-reading it many times. I would love the certificate as well. I hope it's ok to email you from time to time to say hi and fill you in on our progress. Enjoy your summer  
S.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:10AM (-07:00)

## My son is in juvenile detention as we speak...

Monday, August 04, 2008

Hi Mark,

My son is in juvenile detention as we speak, He is calling me constantly to get him out. We had a court appearance last Friday and the judge is keeping him the rest of this week. My son is pleading with me to bond him out, it is tearing at my heart strings. I do not want to go against the judge, he will be in there a total of 2 weeks due to drugs. He is charged with possession of drug paraphernalia a misdemeanor right now. I do not think I should bond him out, he is due to go in front of judge this Friday ...any helpful advice would be appreciated. I believe that he has learned his lesson but these are his consequences, do I help him get out?

M.

.....

Hi M.,

Re: ... *do I help him get out?*

No. You shouldn't try to save him from uncomfortable emotions associated with his poor choices. Over-indulgent parents DO try to save their children from consequences – which is a huge mistake.

Having said this, in Indiana (where I reside), juveniles do NOT have the right to bond out. The same may be true in your area.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:20AM (-07:00)

## He then grabbed me very hard by the arms, pushed me down on my bed ...

Monday, August 04, 2008

Hi Mark,

It's odd to me that just after I emailed you for the certificate, we had a meltdown here in our house. Things have been going so smoothly for several months, and now this happened. I hope you have time to read this.

Please tell me if you have any pointers for this matter. Here is the story...my son, D, 15 years old, has a history of sometimes, not each time, physically attacking me when he is in one of his rages. Tonight, we were having a pleasant conversation, enjoying each other's company. Somehow, it turned sour when he continued on some trivial topic I can't even remember now. I told him to leave my room over and over again. At first we were just playing around, but he kept being very, very annoying. I told him about 3 times to leave, and I then said, if you don't leave my room, you will need to give me your phone. He still didn't leave, so I said, ok, give me your phone. He then just snapped. He began freaking out, screaming and yelling at me. I told him to go in his room and settle down and then we would discuss this, but he kept screaming and yelling. I closed and locked my door, and he banged on it for about 5 minutes. I decided I needed to leave the house till he calmed down. I opened the door and he wouldn't let me leave. He then grabbed me very hard by the arms, pushed me down on my bed and held me there. He even said "you know what I could do to you?" I stayed as calm as I could, no yelling, got up and he then kept throwing a bundle of socks at me, (I know the socks sound silly, but he threw them at me pretty hard over and over again) and then, somehow, he then left my room. He then got quiet and went to his room like I had told him to do before.

Anyway, the last time he touched me like this I told him I would call the police if he did it again. I did call the police (not 911, just the precinct #). All the years we have had problems with D, we have threatened but never called them, until now of course, since we have been doing this program - no half measures!!!!!!.

By the way, my husband is out of town this weekend, so it was just me tonight.

When the police came, about 45 minutes later, I told them what happened and that I just wanted them to talk to him. They told me that if I wanted them to take him in, it would be a serious arrest, overnight at juvenile court, appear in front of the judge, go on his permanent record, but I said this time just a talk. So they came inside, cuffed him, and sat him down and had a pretty scary talk (it made me very sad to see them cuff him, and tears came to his eyes, nothing like this has ever happened in our home before). He was obviously nervous, but also smirking a bit - I think that was just out of nervousness. After all that, after they left, I sat down with him, very straight faced, and went thru the steps of "When someone attacks me it scares me, I know you did it cause you were mad and that

is how you showed your emotions," etc.

Mark, my problem now is this. If I have to call them again, I told D I would have them actually take him in if he attacks me again. I am really concerned though, that he would touch me like that. Other than these steps of the program, do you have any suggestions as to how to help him with this particular problem? We do not have a history of physical abuse anywhere in our family that I know about, my husband and I do not at all physically hurt each other. I don't know where this comes from or why he shows his anger that way. I am afraid for him for his future, and if he does this to me, what will he do to a future girlfriend or wife - it makes me sick to my stomach to even think that way, but I know he's done it to me. I want desperately to help him. He is only 15, am I being over reactive?? I feel this program will work for lots of things, but what do you think about this issue? I feel that something is missing and that I am searching for an answer and some help for my son and I'm not sure where to look. Am I in the right place, do you have any other help for this?

Ok, whenever you get a chance, I would truly appreciate your help. Thanks so, so much.

S.

.....

Hi S.,

Re: *...this time just a talk*. As I was reading your email, I was beginning to get impressed with the way you handled this situation – UNTIL you told the police that you “just wanted them to talk” to your son.

This is a domestic battery case for crying out loud! I'm going to be totally honest with you here:

(1) You slipped back into over-indulgence in a major way, and

(2) The “talk” from police was a joke. Fear-based motivation (which is what happened with the “talk”) will NOT have any longevity or lasting benefit– I promise.

Yes... you should include authorities, but only so they can make a report to send to Juvenile Probation – that's all you need the cops for, because without a formal complaint from you, probation's hands are tied and they cannot proceed with handling the matter in court.

Re: *Other than these steps of the program, do you have any suggestions as to how to help him with this particular problem?*

Yes. Follow the program as intended. You've told your son that you will have police take him the next time he batters you. If you choose NOT to call the police and have your son experience the full negative consequences associated with his poor choice to batter, you will also choose to continue to be on the receiving end of such abuse.

Do you really want your son to grow up with the notion that battery against women has few consequences? I would say that his future wife would not be so tolerant of such abuse.

Re: ...am I being over reactive?? I hope you know the answer to this one!

Having said all this, you are doing a remarkable job overall.

Stay the course. Know that these set backs are normal. Understand that this incident was truly just a "setback" – not a major "catastrophe." And perhaps most importantly, reward yourself for your successes – big and small – rather than focusing on the setbacks.

Thank you for requesting your certificate. YOU DESERVE IT. Do not think otherwise. I've sent it to you as an attachment in this email.

You are a good mother as well as a good student. Wise individuals never believe they are so smart that they cannot benefit from ongoing instruction in the areas of their life that could use some readjusting.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:58AM (-07:00)

## It's OK to Spy on Your Teens!

Monday, August 04, 2008



Hello Mark,

I have successfully (I think) completed your program with my 14-year-old daughter and things are WAY better. It has been a rough two years, and though I'm no fool and know there's more to come, your program has helped me stop what felt like a runaway train.

I have an issue now, which has the potential of causing a riot and need advice. My daughter uses MYSPACE and I know her password as I overheard her tell her cousin last year. I have periodically checked it out to see where she's at in her life. She does not know this, of course. Mostly there is typical teen stuff, comments etc. I should tell you that this winter she had an incident with an older boy (16) she was very in love with. All us mothers forbid them to see each other outside of school do to the age difference, but they got together at a friend's house on the sly and she gave him oral sex which she didn't want to but was afraid to lose him if she didn't. He broke up with her a few days later and needless to say it was a devastating period for her and us.

After many talks and processing, we really felt that she'd matured and learned a really tough lesson. She claimed she was done with boys for a while, felt very used and

heartbroken. Well, yesterday when I was snooping, I read an email from a guy (platonic friend) who said he heard she'd kissed a boy's c----. This boy, who is a junior, has a very bad reputation and has solicited her before and she's claimed she doesn't like him, thinks he's ugly, etc. In her e-mail reply to her friend she laughed it off and said how quickly news spreads, and which version did he want to hear, just that she did, or how many times, and something about playdough. I don't know where or when or (exactly what) this happened because we are in the middle of nowhere and would not allow her to be with a guy unsupervised, but it did and I'm a wreck. Another email to a girlfriend said she was very upset because people knew about her and C.

Two questions: WHY is she doing this? He is gross and this is a small town, AND they are all students at our high school where her DAD teaches!!! She is only 14 ...she still has braces!! She has a great figure and posts umpteen bikini pics and then tells guys "oh, I don't have a good body". Why is she setting herself up to have a sleezy reputation?

My second question: I don't want to tell her I looked at her emails, but I want to address this, so I thought I'd write an anonymous letter to my husband and me from a "concerned mother" who has supposedly heard the gossip. I know this is lying so badly, but privacy is a huge issue with her, and our relationship tends to tip toward the rocky in a heartbeat, but right now I can't think of any other way to bring it up and I am totally depressed about it.

Sincerely,

A.

.....

Hi A.,

**== > Re: *WHY is she doing this?***

Adolescence can be a challenging time for young women. Your daughter's reactions to the physical and emotional changes occurring during puberty often depend on how she feels about herself. If she has strong self-esteem, she is less likely to engage in socially unacceptable behaviors. While everyone makes mistakes, if she is self-confident she will learn from those mistakes and adapt her behavior, rather than repeating the same mistake again.

Despite an emphasis on equality, boys and girls in modern culture still tend to handle self-esteem issues differently. When teenage boys in our society are faced with a period of low self esteem, they continue on with most of their normal activities: they still take that hard math class, try out for the football team and interact socially with their female counterparts. Young women, on the other hand, react differently when faced with this challenge. They often become indifferent, withdrawn, quiet and depressed.

Several large studies have shown girls aged 8 and 9 are confident, assertive and feel good about themselves. This is probably due to the more mature social interactions and skills that females have developed up to this time, especially when compared to their male contemporaries. Surprisingly, these same girls can emerge at the end of adolescence with a poor self-image, a narrowed view of their future, and less confidence about themselves and their abilities.

What controls the development of a healthy self-esteem in teen girls? According to one study, physical appearance was the most important factor. If they are not attractive (by someone else's standards), many girls feel worthless and helpless. Popular culture floods young girls with images of the ideal female figure, personality, and social skills – all of which are mostly inappropriate and unobtainable. The result is not surprising...in order to maintain this ideal of perfection, girls become obsessed with their physical appearance. The extreme reaction in some unfortunate girls is a dependence on diet pills and the development of eating disorders. Young women see movie stars or situation comedy characters as models on which to shape their social interactions. Unfortunately, the behaviors of these "role models" are often biased toward the disrespectful and promiscuous.

Another factor that can lower some teenage girls' self esteem is the loss of community. We used to live in towns where everyone knew each other. Now 72 percent of Americans don't even know their neighbors. Other changes in our society, such as divorce, drugs, and alcohol, seem to have negatively affected teen girls even more than boys.

It is therefore easy to understand why many teenage girls are more concerned about impressing or pleasing others – especially boys -- rather than themselves.

**== > Re: *I don't want to tell her I looked at her emails...***

It's *OK* to Spy on Your Teens! When protecting their teens from internet predators or unsafe behavior, the first step for mothers is to get over their fear of monitoring them. ***Mothers must learn how to monitor internet activity.*** It is a mother's job to protect their teens and foster a healthy, safe lifestyle. It is a mother's job to watch over them and be there to correct potential bad decisions that are all too common in a teenager's life.

Different mothers may choose different degrees of monitoring, but all mothers need to deploy some strategy to monitor online behavior. What level of monitoring a mother may choose will depend on the mother, the teenager, and the relationship. One thing should be clear, it is OK to monitor your teens. If you feel uneasy about this ***or you think it is wrong to monitor Myspace activity for example***, you may some day regret it.

First, Have the *Right* Discussion about Internet Safety. Regardless of what level of online internet monitoring you choose, one tactic should be executed first: talk with your teen. Maybe you have, but did you say the right thing? You want to ***understand their level of knowledge about internet predators.*** Make the conversation casual... try to blend in to it from another similar topic so the teenager does not feel they are being lectured.

Determine whether they are naive to internet danger or not. This will help you plan your strategy. ***Ask them*** if they meet new people online or just communicate with existing friends. ***Ask if*** they are aware of cases where teens were put in danger from meeting people online. ***Ask if*** they are aware that the people they meet may not be the age or sex they say they are. There is no reason not to instill a little bit of fear. Fear is the body's natural protection system. Keep this in mind when talking with your teen.

Why Would You Spy? There are two basic things a mother needs to protect her teenager from on the internet: predators and bad behavior. The first one is obvious. The second one is not so much caused by the internet, but is divulged through the teen's use of the internet. ***You may not know that your teenager is engaged in sex, drinking, or drugs***, but chances are you can find out through their MySpace pages. The teen may post blatant



photos, or the content may be cryptic and difficult for a mother to understand.

Remember, it is a mother's job to watch over her teens and protect them. Teens, by nature, do make bad decisions. Straight "A" students heavily active in sports and study have become victims. Why? Because they just didn't realize that what they were posting online intrigued a predator. They weren't aware that that predator could "connect the dots" to determine where the teen lived, worked, and played.

Two Effective Spying Techniques for Mothers:

### 1. LOW LEVEL: MySpace Internet Monitoring –

This strategy for MySpace safety is geared toward mothers that are quite ***sure they have an honest and open relationship with their teenager***. The mothers are sure that their teen would not hide anything from them and would be open to sharing their online activity with them.

Caveat: Mothers, whether they can admit it or not, are usually gullible to this scenario. It feels good to think that you have this type of relationship with your teen, but all too often you don't. The teen may be a great kid that does little wrong, but remember that most teens that get into trouble were once good teens.

Low Level Monitoring is a strategy for mothers that are very confident they have a completely open relationship with their teenager MySpace user. They are sure that the teen will be open to letting the mother partake in their online experience. Keep in mind that most mothers are gullible about this. Also keep in mind that most teens that begin to make bad decisions (drinking, sex, drugs, other crime) started off as good teens. That being said, a good kid that starts to stray would most likely create a new MySpace profile that their mothers do not know about. Teens do stray, it's a reality.

**Step One: Have the Introduction Talk**-- Let your teenager know you are interested in their online pages and would like to participate. Tell them that part of your interest is to help keep them safe from internet predators. For Low Level Monitoring, it is not necessary to go into anything concerning watching them for bad behavior because you should be confident such behavior does not exist.

Tell them you would like their help setting up your own MySpace account so you can become their "friend" and exchange online information. Even if you know how to setup the account or feel comfortable doing so with the instruction link above, you should **let them help you**. It gives them a sense of purpose and you can also get some queues as to how they may have setup their account (this is an important part of keeping your teenager safe and is the topic of Step Two.)

Here are some bullets to review with your teenager:

- Ask them about their photos and make sure they understand why they must pay very close attention to the photos they post. Be sure that there are no identifiable objects or things that may zero in on a location (high school info, license plate, street signs, etc). Also be sure your teenager's MySpace photos are not in any way sexually suggestive.
- MySpace is for exchanging information with friends you already have, not a place for meeting new friends. If they do meet someone through MySpace, they should treat

them much differently, not sharing any personal information or anything that may divulge where they live, go to school, or work.

- Never post information that can be used to find you: real name, school, job location, address, telephone number, local sports teams, clubs you belong to, or favorite shopping places that may be unique to your area. Teens may claim that some of the info is kept private or only viewable in the MySpace setup. Please remember that there are people out there that are quite savvy and can find their way into this info.

**Step Two: Review How Your Teenager's Account is Setup**-- Part of step one was allowing your teenager to help setup your own MySpace account. This is important because it is a lead-in to you "naturally" discovering some things that may be of concern (if they exist, of course). We will go through those issues next but let me give you an example first:

I is not a good idea to put your real hometown or High School into MySpace. The reason is this acts as a great location and time-spent piece of information for potential predators. There is no real reason to have this information available to the MySpace public. Your teenager should be sharing information on MySpace with friends they already know, who already know where they live and where they go to school. When setting up your account with your teenager, the lead-in is "hey, this might be a bad idea because of such and such, let's review your setup for other problems..." **Review the teenager's Account Settings as follows:**

Login and click the "Home" link. Next click on "Account Settings". Take note of the following:

**Privacy Settings:** Click on Privacy Settings and take note of the following MySpace privacy settings (they are all important, but these are critical):

- check "*Require email or last name to add me as a friend.*" This makes sure that people that become your teenager's friend actually know your teenager or at least have been screened and accepted by them.
- check "*Friends Only Blog Comments*" to avoid some stranger posting obscenities to your teenager's blog
- check "*My Friends Only*" under Who Can View My Full Profile to ensure that your teenager's profile is only viewed by people they want to view it.

**IM Privacy Settings:** If your teenager IMs (Instant Messages) you should change this setting to "*Only Friends Can IM Me*"

**Step Three: Review Your Teenager's Entire Site**--You may want to do this one on your own time when your teenager is not around because you'll want to closely analyze content for the above mentioned issues (location, sexual, contact info, etc.)

Now that you are a MySpace friend to your teenager you can simply login to your MySpace account and click on your teenager's profile in your "friends" section. When you get to your teenager's profile, take a close look at the following items which all have links from the main page:

·"More Photos" link under the main upper left photo. Examine all photos your teenager has posted.

·"Videos" link: review all videos for potentially dangerous content.

·"Blog" link: review all blog entries for anything too revealing (as discussed above)

The "Friends Section" In the lower right will be your teenager's friends. You should see your photo or link in this section if they have made you their friend. Read the comments from your teenager's friends. Also, go to each of their sites and review their profiles. Remember, at this point (in your teenager's friend's profile) this info is open to anyone. You are just another web surfer looking at your teenager's friend's profile. If they have the "Friends Only" privacy setting set, you will be very limited as to what you can see since they didn't add you as a MySpace "friend."

**Step Four: Monitor Your Teenager's Site and Participate--** Remember that a teen's life changes like the seasons. Their interests change, fads change, new friends come and go, etc. It is important that you check up on the content of your teenager's site regularly. Even better, participate a bit by posting comments to their blog, uploading pictures, etc. It will be good for your teenager's online safety and good for your relationship.

## 2. HIGH LEVEL: MySpace Spying –

The high level strategy is for those mothers that are in one or more of the following situations:

- The teen is suspected of bad behavior, such as drug use, drinking or sex
- The teenager has been in situations in the past that involve dishonesty (so even if they allow the mothers to see a MySpace profile, it may not be their *only* MySpace profile)
- Their teenager is hiding the fact that they have a MySpace profile
- Their teenager will not allow them to see their MySpace profile

Warning: Always read and abide by the MySpace terms of service agreement.

You have emailed me because you are a concerned mother taking the proper steps to protect your teen(s) on and off the internet. As a mother, it is your job to protect your teens. The consequences of not doing so are far too bad to even fool around in this arena. If you feel that you've already tried the below spying techniques to find and watch your teenager's MySpace activity with no success, you may need to use stealth strategies.

In order to successfully spy on your teens MySpace activity, you should first attempt the low level monitoring..

Assuming low level will not or did not work, let's get on to spying strategies. First you need to be familiar with how to setup a MySpace account.

Setup a MySpace account, but do not use any information that will identify who you are. Disguise everything, even your real name. Always be thinking that your teen may be searching MySpace to see if you're out there!

Now you have the ability to easily search and browse your way around. The first step to take is to begin to search for your teen by name.

Note that this menu will not look the same in every profile. Users often customize them to change the look and feel of their page. The link content itself will still be there, you may just have to look a little harder if you're on someone else's page.

Click on the third choice from the left, "search". Here is a description of each of your

search choices:

·**Find a Friend:** Here you can search for someone's name, email address, or display name.

·**Find Your Classmate:** For searching by school, if the account holder decided to enter school information!

·**Search MySpace Profiles:** This is basically a keyword search like you use in search engines. It will search in MySpace profiles for the term(s) you enter. Contrary to a very popular book on how to use MySpace (where you pay for the same information you're reading here for free!), this field can be very useful for locating someone. I'll discuss below.

Start your quest with searching by your teenager's full name. Unless the name is unique, you'll probably get multiple returns. Browse through the names and see if you get lucky and come across your teen.

If you do find your teen, remember that the reason you are here is because you suspect they have the potential to hide things from you. They may setup a "perfect kid" profile with all the info that would make them easy to find. **This "bluff" site is setup for you: the naive mother.** Don't be naive, get the right knowledge and go into stealth mode!

If you had no luck with the real name, next it's time to try email addresses. Remember, email addresses are as easy to setup as MySpace accounts and you may not be familiar with all of your teenager's email addresses. One way to search for hidden emails is to go to Yahoo.com and click on "People Search". Fill out the form to search for your teenager and then choose to look for email addresses.

Remember there should always be a school address - if you don't know your teenager's then go to the schools web site and look for contact information. Find anyone's email and note the format used: `firstname_lastname@school.edu` or `firstinitial_lastname@school.edu` etc. - use this format to back into your teenager's potential address.

With as many email addresses you can find search the email field under "find a friend."

Next, try the school field. This will probably result in a lot of profiles. When you have a list of profiles, look for your teen *as well as their real life friends!* More than likely their friend's profile has a link to your teen and you may even see a photo of your teen on the friend's profile to bring you right to where you want to be!

OK, so name and email did not work? Next step: search for friends. Make a list of all the teens your teen pals around with and do the same searches mentioned above but for their names and/or email addresses (you already looked for them in school). Remember to try the school email method mentioned above since you probably don't normally correspond via email with your teen's friends.

If still no luck you need to dig a little deeper. Using the keyword search box at the top of the search page, start looking for nick names. Do your teen's friends call him or her by a nick name such as Big Al or just your last name? Try those terms in the keyword search toolbox.

If you haven't found your kid yet, but you are quite sure they have a MySpace profile, then it's time for more advanced techniques.

If you have found your kid, then it's time to determine what is going on in their secret MySpace life.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:56AM (-07:00)

## I are currently experiencing the "getting worse before it gets bett...

Monday, August 04, 2008

Hi G.,

**I've responded throughout your email below:**

Dear Mark,

I've written to you before. I had asked you about birth control for my daughter. Just a couple of questions as we move forward these next couple of weeks.

Anyway, my husband and I are currently experiencing the "getting worse before it gets better" that you mentioned. Our 15-year-old daughter has now resorted to telling me quite frequently, not her father "You can shut up now!" He is finding this as frustrating as I am right now. We are having difficulty just getting her to sit and talk to us. We tried the sample contract regarding fair fighting to establish some ground rules for all 3 of us only to be told "I'm not signing anything". She is not interested in anything to do with "feelings" and we are "too late" to make changes. She tells us what she is going to do and has ceased asking permission for anything.

== > IMPORTANT: There are 2 versions of the Fair Fighting strategy. It sounds like you are using the one in the Printable Version of the eBook. For teenagers, you will want to use the one in the Online Version. Also, if you have not viewed ALL the Instructional Videos in the Online Version – you are missing 60% of the material.

The weekend before my mother came for a visit. Grandmother and granddaughter had a late night conversation where my mother told me that my daughter had told her about the boyfriend and some of what was going on at home as well. My mother revealed to her things from my teenage years. For example, that her father and I were dating, I got pregnant at 16 and had an abortion. She told her some very personal and negative things that I don't think my daughter was emotionally ready to hear right now or for that matter from anyone else but her father and I. Needless to say this gave my daughter additional "ammunition" to "fight" the changes we are trying to implement with her.

1. I wondered if you have any advice on how to handle this?

== > I wouldn't worry about this one. You've got nothing to be ashamed about. The truth about some of your past is out – and that's o.k.

2. Also, my husband asked how we should respond if she asks us where we are getting these contracts and chore charts? She has been doing some chores to earn an allowance but we liked the idea of implementing the point system. Money, the computer and learning to drive are very important to her right now.

== > Say, "From the internet." That's all she needs to know.

We have discovered that we both have been overindulgent with this one as she is our only daughter and the youngest child. Not the best excuse but we are coming to accept our situation these days.

At this moment my husband and I are waiting at home. Our daughter ran away again last night and we just filed a police report. We are looking over your materials so that we are prepared for what to expect when she comes home or is brought home. We haven't finished the 4 weeks yet as we were planning to implement Week 3 assignments. It is very difficult when things are getting worse around. I am trying to find my poker face here, as is my husband. Can you give us some guidance? Thank you.

== > It sounds like you are doing exactly what you should. Can I alleviate your anxiety about the tough work you're doing? No. Always keep in the back of your mind that you are in the process of developing emotional muscles that you would never have developed otherwise – muscles that will make you stronger ...muscles that will help you conquer future problems.

Hunker down – stay tough! The reward will be well worth the effort.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:48AM (-07:00)

## She is adopted from Poland, and has a gypsy background...

Monday, August 04, 2008

The problem we have is our daughter is not under the Juvenile system in Singapore any longer. She knows it, and today the school phoned me to say that she does her utter best of getting expelled from school ...also self mutilates so she can come back to Singapore and live her live of "FREEDOM" ...doing what she wants, when she wants, absolutely nothing affects her, when disciplined she runs away. Sleeps on the streets, goes clubbing, drinks, smokes and gets into drugs. Unknown friends help her....

By the way Mark she is adopted from Poland, and has a gypsy background. We have had her since she was 9 months.

Do we let her stay with us, lock all doors as she steals from us, comes and goes as she

pleases? Send her to find a Job? No school in Singapore will take her.

She plays the role promises, signs whatever you want and on the first occasion runs away, does not care about consequences.

One month in The Singapore Girls Home in March and July are as quickly forgotten as a nightmare. She is a challenge for an experienced psychologist, and we have no idea why she makes the choices she does.

Her non-communicating attitude does not help, as we have already sent her 14 days to a psychological clinic for a diagnosis. Result, knows what she does and totally responsible for her actions.

So if we let go of the outcome, how can we possibly live with her at home in unbearable circumstances?

At the moment the whole situation affects my husband's work, as he needs to take off every time we have a situation.

Thank you so much for your support, and I hope you can give us some advice for the handling of this impossible child.

Mr. & Mrs. G.

.....

Hi Mr. & Mrs. G.,

"Letting go of the outcome" does indeed include "letting go of her" (i.e., letting go of the daughter you hoped you would have had).

It would be much easier -- and a whole lot less painful -- to simply beat your head against a brick wall than it would be to allow her to continue to live in your home.

Troubled adopted children (like troubled non-adopted children) will often display observable signs that they need help. The following list shows a few possible indicators. If your adopted daughter exhibits just one or two of the problems described in this section (with the exception of the last four items on the list), she may have a temporary problem. But if three or more of these problems show up, or any of the last four, she may only improve with several years of professional help:

- Association with undesirable friends
- Change in sleep habits (needing too little sleep or sleeping all the time)
- Deteriorating personal hygiene
- Frequent lying or evasion
- Lack of friends
- Loss of interest in hobbies or friends
- Obsession with fears and worries
- Persistent "orphanage behavior," such as rocking or head-banging that occurs beyond the toddler years
- Serious drop in grades
- Slow physical or mental development

- Sudden loss of appetite or extremely increased appetite
- Runs away for extended periods of time
- Physical violence or attacks
- Antisocial behavior such as stealing, starting fires, or harming animals
- Self-injurious behavior (cutting or harming oneself)
- Substance abuse

Perhaps one of the major oversights adoptive parents make -- one that agencies fail to adequately prepare parents for -- is the role anger plays in the life of the adopted child. Many parents that I consult with mistakenly believe that a loving, stable home is enough for the adopted child ...that a good home environment will make better all the losses or traumas from the past. To the adopted child, however, love isn't enough. They have lost a great deal and they typically get little validation for this from those around them. Instead, many get the message they should stop wallowing and be grateful.

Those of us who weren't adopted cannot fully grasp the meaning of being given away. As I work with adoptive parents on listening to their child, this issue becomes paramount. From the adult perspective, the adopted child was taken out of an unsafe environment and this should be seen as good. From the child's point of view, however, something very valuable was taken away: their home, their identity, and their family.

Children are quite adept at communicating their feelings. Strange as it is, adults consistently miss the messages. For the adopted child, anger is his way of communicating feelings of loss, grief, fear, and terror. Unfortunately, these messages get misinterpreted and the child subsequently gets labeled as defiant.

Most Americans who adopt children from other countries find joy. But others aren't prepared for the risks—and may find themselves overwhelmed. I am certainly not suggesting that adults stop adopting children. Nor am I insinuating that every adopted child will have behavioral or emotional disturbance. What I am pointing out, however, is that the needs and concerns of adopted children are unique. When we truly listen to the adopted child, we can better understand how he or she is attempting to make sense out of a life where they are asked to relinquish one identity and assume another. Further, by being sensitive to the inner reality of the adopted child, we let them know we understand how confusing it can be to live in a world of ghosts, surrogate parents, and loss.

Adoption triggers five lifelong or core issues, regardless of the circumstances of the adoption or the characteristics of the participants:

1. Grief
2. Guilt and shame
3. Identity problems
4. Intimacy problems
5. Sense of loss

It is not my intent here to question adoption, but rather to challenge some adoption assumptions, specifically, the persistent notion that adoption is not different from other forms of parenting and the accompanying disregard for the pain and struggles inherent in adoption.

Adoption is created through loss; without loss there would be no adoption. Loss, then, is at the hub of the wheel. Adopted children suffer their first loss at the initial separation from the birth family. Awareness of their adopted status is inevitable. Even if the loss is beyond conscious awareness, recognition, or vocabulary, it affects the adoptee on a very



profound level. Any subsequent loss, or the perceived threat of separation, becomes more formidable for adopted children than their non-adopted peers.

The grief process in adoption, so necessary for healthy functioning, is further complicated by the fact that there is no end to the losses, no closure to the loss experience. Loss in adoption is not a single occurrence. There is the initial, identifiable loss and innumerable secondary sub-losses. Loss becomes an evolving process, creating a theme of loss in both the individual's and family's development. Those losses affect all subsequent development.

Adopted children seldom are able to view their placement into adoption by the birthparents as anything other than total rejection. Adopted children even at young ages grasp the concept that to be "chosen" means first that one was "un-chosen," reinforcing adopted children's lowered self-concept. Society promulgates the idea that the "good" adoptee is the one who is not curious and accepts adoption without question. At the other extreme of the continuum is the "bad" adoptee who is constantly questioning, thereby creating feelings of rejection in the adoptive parents.

Adopted children suggest that something about their very being caused the adoption. The self-accusation is intensified by the secrecy often present in past and present adoption practices. These factors combine to lead the adoptee to conclude that the feelings of guilt and shame are indeed valid.

Adopted children lacking medical, genetic, religious, and historical information are plagued by questions such as: Who are they? Why were they born? Were they in fact merely a mistake, not meant to have been born, an accident? This lack of identity may lead adopted children, particularly in adolescent years, to seek out ways to belong in more extreme fashion than many of their non-adopted peers. Adolescent adopted children are over represented among those who join sub-cultures, run away, become pregnant, or totally reject their families.

Adopted children are keenly aware that they were not party to the decision that led to their adoption. They had no control over the loss of the birth family or the choice of the adoptive family. The adoption proceeded with adults making life-altering choices for them. This unnatural change of course impinges on growth toward self-actualization and self-control. Adolescent adopted children, attempting to master the loss of control they have experienced in adoption, frequently engage in power struggles with adoptive parents and other authority figures. They may lack internalized self-control, leading to a lowered sense of self-responsibility. These patterns, frequently passive/aggressive in nature, may continue into adulthood.

I know this information doesn't help you solve any problems, but I hope it helps you understand your daughter a bit better.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:13PM (-07:00)

# I have an 18 year-old daughter who left home for 10 days after an a...

Monday, August 04, 2008

I have an 18 year-old daughter who left home for 10 days after an argument. We thought she was staying with girlfriends. We found out she was staying with a 26 yr-old boyfriend that we never had met. Our niece told us that he was in jail for drug pushing. He bought her things and gave her a place to stay. I found her walking down the street last night and insisted that she come home. She did and threatened to leave home as soon as she could to be with him - because he makes her happy and does not pressure her like we do. What should be our next move? Should we take away her stuff? In particular her cell phone to try to find a phone number or where this guy lives. Or is it too late since she is legally an adult?

.....

Hi B.,

Re: *What should be our next move?*

Help her move out.

Re: *Should we take away her stuff?*

No. She's an adult now that needs to begin the process of leaving the nest.

Re: *Or is it too late since she is legally an adult?*

I think you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about her boyfriend. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to help her move out.

Remember, self-reliance is key. Whenever in doubt, ask yourself, "Will the decision I'm about to make foster the development of self-reliance – or inhibit it?" Clearly, keeping her from moving out will inhibit such development.

I understand you have heard that her "boyfriend" is a pusher. However, she will need to learn some life-lessons and make up her own mind whether or not this guy is the person she really wants to "hang" with. Don't save her from this opportunity to learn a valuable lesson. She may fall ...she may want to return home. If so, let her return briefly – then get busy helping her move out on her own again -- or help her begin college.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Adult Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:36PM (-07:00)

## He says he's not coming back home...

Monday, August 04, 2008

My 16 year old is smoking weed and he knows i have 0 tolerance for this behavior so he moves in with his dad that has major drug issues himself so therefore he has no guidance. What do I do? He says he's not coming back home and doesn't answer or return my calls.....HELP!!!

.....

Hi C.,

I would allow him to stay with his father. Of course, it will be highly likely that the two of them will have a major blowout at some point, at which time your son will want to return to your house. Then you'll have some leverage (i.e., able to enforce the "no pot smoking" policy in your home).

Mark

*My Out-of-Control Teen*

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:47PM (-07:00)

## The issue is that she gave oral sex to a boy she knows...

Tuesday, August 05, 2008

Hello Mark,

Last Friday I sent you an e-mail re snooping on my daughter's myspace and im accounts. You advised me that this was okay. Thank you SO much. But since I am a category 2, ie. stealth mode mom, how do I confront her with the information I've gleaned? I had suggested sending my husband and me an anonymous letter tipping us off as a way to open a dialogue with her. What do you think? The issue is that she gave oral sex to a boy she knows, but doesn't particularly like (this after she did this with her first love this winter who then dumped her, and broke her heart). Since I discovered this most recent event of last week, I snooped again and learned it was possibly two guys, not just the one. Various guys who she knows through school are IMing her and asking her about it, how many times, etc. One guy, who would like to date her but she doesn't want to, asked if they could be "friends with benefits". And her answer was", ldk , maybe!!!!. In some of the emails and IMs I read she is upset that people know and are talking about it. You mentioned that girls with low self esteem often respond to incidents like the one with her boyfriend this winter by withdrawing socially but she definitely is not-she seems to be self destructing. Please, please, help me to help her. I am just so heartbroken by this and do not know what to do.

Sincerely, A.

.....

Hi A.,

*Re: I had suggested sending my husband and me an anonymous letter tipping us off as a way to open a dialogue with her. What do you think?*

I think she will deny your "allegations." Then what will you say (short of telling her that you've been snooping – and thus know what the truth REALLY is)?

Rather than trying to catch her in a lie, you may want to talk to her about sex (that's really what this whole thing is mostly about).

In addition, I would recommend that you simply monitor/limit computer use:

- Do buy some kind of Internet filtering program.
- Do know how to check her Internet History.
- Do start a conversation with your kid about Internet safety.
- Don't let her have a webcam for ANY reason.
- Don't let her have a wireless laptop in their room.
- Don't let her have an Internet accessible computer in their room.
- Make a behavior contract with your daughter. This will enable her to know what you expect of her behavior while online, as well as the consequences for violating the contract.

I've listed some of the best programs on the net that will help you with this dilemma. Check each one out and see which is best for your needs.

·Working secretly in the background, CYBERSitter analyzes all Internet activity. Whenever it detects activity the parent has elected to restrict, it takes over and blocks the activity before it takes place. If desired, CYBERSitter will maintain a complete history of all Internet activity, including attempts to access blocked material. Strictly 32-bit, CYBERSitter 97 is designed for Windows 95 and Windows NT exclusively.

·Net Nanny allows you to deal with: WWW URLs, News Groups, IRC Channels, FTPs, E-mail, Non-Internet BBSs, Words, Phrases, Personal Information (address, credit card no. etc.) It's a complete Internet and PC management tool. Runs with all the major online providers too! Note: Does not currently run on MACs.

·Cyber Patrol allows those responsible for children to restrict access to certain times of day, limit the total time spent on-line in a day, and block access to Internet sites they deem inappropriate. Cyber Patrol also can be used to control access to the major on-line services and to local applications such as games and personal financial managers.

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:18PM (-07:00)

# I have a meeting with the principle next Fri to try and formulate a...

Tuesday, August 05, 2008

Hi Mark,

Hope things are going well with you.

I have received A\_\_\_'s latest school report and the comments from teachers are similar to past years. These include "A\_\_\_ lacks persistent concentration and is easily distracted by those around her..." and "...she could make better use of her time when she first arrives at school and would do well to develop effective routines so that she is ready to begin learning rather than involving herself in disputes with others. A\_\_\_ is encouraged to develop an awareness of how her actions might be unintentionally affecting and antagonising others...modify her own behavior to resolve or avoid conflict...increase her usage of the Mathletics website to extend her ability with regard to speed and accuracy in Maths...easily distracted during share and show sessions..." and the list goes on.

I have a meeting with the principle next Fri to try and formulate a long term plan to manage her in the classroom and I really don't know where to start. All these "A\_\_\_ needs to" comments are all very well but how do we achieve this? I can't get her to do any homework without a fuss. At home she displays traits of ADHD (inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity) but I don't have a formal diagnosis. We are managing her behavior at home as per your e-book as you know. At school she is disruptive and inattentive but not to the degree she is at home. She is certainly antagonistic and rude to the kids at school and has no special friends as a result, and although I do try and have kids over to play there are always problems in relation to her immature behavior and it is quite exhausting for me.

I don't want to make the teachers defensive by trying to suggest that A\_\_\_ needs a management plan at school but her efforts in each subject have gone from being "exemplary" to just "satisfactory" over the last 2 years, the comments take up more room than they used to and I think her grades are going to be affected as time moves on (Maths has dropped from an A to a B this past six months but Literacy is holding at A for the present).

Do you think I am doing the right thing by meeting with the principle? Am I over reacting and should I just let things slide without worrying too much at this time? Can I formulate a plan without offending anyone?

I'd really appreciate you thoughts.

Thanks Mark,

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Re: *Do you think I am doing the right thing by meeting with the principle? Yes.*

Re: *Am I over reacting and should I just let things slide without worrying too much at this time? I don't think you are over-reacting.*

Re: *Can I formulate a plan without offending anyone? Possibly.*

Your plan should really be the teacher's plan. You can come up with a plan, but the teachers will be the ones who will have to implement it. It would be better if they came up with their own plan.

Here are some suggestions:

Any teacher can institute the following suggestions, even without formal student classification:

1. Learn about ADHD. Typically, teachers in the higher grades have a harder time "believing" in the condition. The older students no longer appear physically hyperactive. Organization and planning problems are frequently misinterpreted as lack of preparation and motivation. The school special education staff should have materials for classroom teachers.
  1. Don't take the ADHD behaviors as personal challenges. The answer to the question "Why can't she listen to me like all of the other children?" is that she can't turn off her ADHD at will. It isn't personal.
  1. Provide help for deficits at the moment it is needed, not negative feedback when it is already too late. Unfortunately, the simple reality is that punishment does not usually teach the needed behaviors to ADHD kids. This is because many children with ADHD have difficulty "doing what they know," not "knowing what to do." They already "know," for example, that they should come to class prepared. Once we understand that punishment has not been working, we are ready to provide relief for their disabilities by guiding them at the moment guidance is needed-rather than continued disbelief that they did it wrong again.
1. Presenting Material to ADHD Children:
- Alert child's attention with phrases such as "This is important."
  - Allow physically hyperactive children out of their seats to hand out and pick up papers, etc.
  - Break down longer directions into simpler chunks.
  - Check for comprehension.
  - Encourage students to mark incorrect multiple-choice answers with an "x" first. This allows them to "get started" quickly, while forcing them to read all of the choices before making a final selection.
  - Encourage students to underline the key words of directions.
  - Establish good eye contact.
  - Have child sit in the front of the class.

· Tap on the desk (or use other code) to bring the child back into focus.

1. Organizational Help:

1. Recognize that disorganization is a major disability for almost everyone with ADHD. In fact, it is difficult to diagnose ADHD in the absence of organizational problems. Yes, ADHD students can - and frequently do - write a wonderful paper and then forget to hand it in. This striking unevenness in skills is what makes it a learning disability.

1. Ensure that parents and child all know the correct assignment. Yes, most students can take this responsibility upon themselves. Those with ADHD, though, usually cannot. It is unfair and counter-productive to let intelligent students flounder because of this disability. Once informed of the needed work, the child is still responsible to work (with his/her parents) to get it done. The following options can be used. This part will take work, especially to keep the system going:

i. Inform about typical routines (such as vocabulary quizzes on Fridays).

ii. Hand out written assignments for the week; or,

iii. Initial student's homework assignment pads after each period. Please do not expect the student to come up after class for the signature on their own. If they were organized enough to do that, we would not need to be doing this. And, yes, the typical student is organized enough to come to the teacher; but this is not the typical student.

1. Notify family immediately of any late assignments by one of following. Waiting for mid-term notices is too late to correct the problem, and too late for the student to behaviorally notice the connection between his/her performance and the consequences.

i. A phone call or e-mail takes the child out of the loop, and works best.

ii. The parent could call the team leader/guidance counselor each week for an update.

iii. The parent could mail weekly a card to each teacher. The card would simply have spaces for missed work and comments, and is dropped back into the mail.

1. Allow for expedient make up of late or incorrectly done homework. If deduction for lateness actually works to correct the problem, then keep doing it; if not, recognize the problem as a currently uncorrectable disability. In such a case, the work does need to be completed, but is not fair for a persistent organizational disability to cause excessive and demoralizing deductions. If, for some reason, it is necessary to give an "F" for incomplete work, remember that an F is 65, not 0. Trying to get a quarter decent grade while averaging in a "0" or two is virtually impossible. A grade of "0" is excessive and counter-productive.

1. Simple accommodations for other frequently associated problems:

1. Dysgraphia (hand writing problems)

i. Use of a computer.

ii. Graph paper helps line up math problems.

iii. Provide a copy of class notes, or arrange for peer to make carbon copy.

iv. Minimize deductions for neatness and spelling. Instead, give extra points for neatness.

- 1. Dyscalculia (math problems)
  - i. Liberal use of a calculator.
  - ii. Consider doing every other problem if homework takes too long.

You may want to use these suggestions as a starting point as you work with the principal to create a "plan."

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:03PM (-07:00)

## Room-Cleaning Solution

Tuesday, August 05, 2008

Mark-

Thanks for the advice. I did as you said: My 11-year-old S\_\_\_ refused to clean-up his room ...so I had my 9-year-old C\_\_\_ do it, and then deducted a portion of S\_\_\_'s allowance and paid C\_\_\_ .

S\_\_\_ was not happy that C\_\_\_ was in his room and that most of his allowance went to C\_\_\_ . But guess what, I don't the problem of S\_\_\_ refusing to clean his room anymore.

Thanks for your help on this one,

S.D.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:54PM (-07:00)

## Anger Management Classes for Mad Teen

Wednesday, August 06, 2008

Hi Mark, What is your opinion? There is a place here in Memphis called Exchange Club Family Center, they have programs to help end family violence. They have a 10 week anger management program for adolescent males (they attend 1 x per week). Do you think this would be helpful, or a waste of time? Of course, we will continue your program. Thanks for advice.

S.

.....

Anger Management classes for your teenager is just another "traditional" parenting strategy that will have little bang for your buck. In too many cases, any form of counseling (other than family counseling) makes a bad problem worse, because the teenager feels he is being singled out as "the problem" and reacts accordingly.



I would strongly suggest you stick with Online Parent Support for now.

Don't get distracted,

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:13AM (-07:00)

## Runaway & Pregnant Daughter

Wednesday, August 06, 2008

Dear Mark Hutten,

I don't want to alienate my runaway daughter; I don't want to enable her. I haven't seen her since Wednesday morning. She does text me. I can't practice your principles because she's not here to practice them on. I want her to come home at night. When she has the baby, around Thanksgiving, I want to help her raise her and not have her dragging the baby around as she hangs out with whomever. I know where she works, I know approximately where her new lover lives. We own the title on her car. I need specific strategies and approaches, please.

Thank you,

A.

.....

Hi A.,

Runaway teens, seemingly unmanageable, desperate, desolate, lonely AND alone... they run, in one of two directions:

1. Away from something, someone, a bad situation, perceived threat, disciplined unloving and/or abusive, or in more complex cases of troubled teen run-aways a loving home environment where there are for them, in their minds no real future; or maybe in the other direction.

2. Towards something, the unknown, safety, a life where they can live according to their own rules, not answering to anyone else, where they can be independent, make the rules, be their own boss, independence and freedom to do as they please and answer to no-one... the list could go on and on hypothetically speaking.

Teens who run away from home are often crying for attention. Some teens will attempt to run away just once, after an unusually heated argument or situation in the household, and return shortly after. More serious cases, however, happen with teens in extreme emotional turmoil.

Parents also need to be extremely aware of the symptoms, warning signs and dangers of teenage depression. Far too many teens are suffering from this disease and going untreated. Often, runaways feel they have no other choice but to leave their home, and this is in many cases related to their feelings of sadness, anger and frustration due to

depression.

Teens who become runaways will have shown symptoms and warning signs prior to running away. Knowing these signs is the first step to prevention; the second is learning how to prevent symptoms all together. Communication is KEY!

Here are concrete prevention tips:

- Always use direct eye contact when speaking.
- Anger is difficult to subside. However, it is important to never raise your voice or yell/scream at your teen, especially when they are already doing so. A battle of strength doesn't get anyone anywhere.
- If both parents are involved in the conversation, it is very important to take turns, rather than gang up on your teen together. Make sure each parent allows time for your teen to speak in between.
- If your teen is demanding or threatening you, be sure to get professional advice or help from a qualified mental health professional.
- Keep a calm demeanor and insist that your teen does as well. Do not respond to their anger, but instead, wait until they are calm.
- Keep in mind that it is possible to agree with your teen, without doing whatever they want you to. For example, you might agree that there are little differences between 17 year-olds and 21 year-olds, but that doesn't mean you agree with having a party serving alcohol at your house.
- Let's say you are sure you understand your teen's point of view and they understand you understand. If you still don't agree with their statement, tell your teen "I think I understand, but I do not agree. I want to think we can understand each other, but we don't have to agree."
- Make sure that you comprehend what your teen is saying, and when you do, let them know. Simply stating "I understand" can go a long way to making your teen feel as though you are respecting their feelings and thoughts, as well as taking them in to consideration.
- NEVER interrupt your teenager when they are speaking or trying to explain their feelings or thoughts. Even if you completely disagree, it is important to wait until they have finished. Keep in mind that just listening and using the words "I understand" does not mean that you agree or will do what they want.
- Never use threats or dare your teen to run away, even if you think they wouldn't do it.
- Refrain from using sarcasm or negativity that may come off as disrespect for your teen.
- Take a break if you get too overwhelmed or upset to continue the conversation with a calm attitude.
- Talk less, slower, and use fewer words than your teen.
- Under no circumstances should you use derogatory names, labels or titles such as liar, childish, immature, untrustworthy, cruel, stupid, ignorant, punk, thief or brat. Continue to be respectful of your teen, even if they have been disrespectful to you.
- When your teen has finished speaking, ask politely if they have anything else they'd like to talk about or share with you.

If your teen runs away—

- Call every one of your teenagers friends. Talk to their parents first, not the friend. Teenagers tend to stick together and will not always tell you the truth. The parents will tell you if they've heard their child talking to yours on the phone and it will also alert them to watch for what their child is doing.

- Call your local Juvenile Detention Officer and ask for their help in finding out your rights concerning what you may or may not do if you find your child yourself.
- Call your local television stations. Many today are more than willing to run stories on missing teens since so many have been lured from home by 'friends' they met online.
- Check any local weeklies and online community papers; they are usually more than willing to help.
- Contact your teenager's friends, their parents, and school staff. Express concern and clearly state your willingness to work out any problems that might exist.
- Do not "storm" a relatively safe place that your child might be staying. If they run out the back door you'll have no idea where they are. They might also run to a less safe harbor.
- Do not threaten the school, friends, or parents. These people may be potential allies. They are the most likely to help if they understand, that you are willing to listen to your child and be open to other perspectives. Even though you're very worried, remain calm. Threatening statements or making accusations only reinforces the notion that you are an unreasonable person. If you have reason to believe that specific individuals are harming your child, pass that information onto the police.
- Go straight to the local authorities, be it police station or sheriff's office. Take with you the flyers you have made up, a copy of the id, color pictures and digital pictures on a floppy. Get in their faces. Do not just make phone calls, be there in person. Drive them nuts until they do something. Make them understand that you are a concerned parent and that you will not let them ignore the fact that YOUR child is missing.
- If your teenager is gone for over 24 hours, or if you have reason to suspect foul play, call the police.
- Make sure they list your runaway in the national database.
- Make sure you follow up and stay in touch with parents and the police. They are your best bet in finding your child and bringing them home.
- Make up one-page flyers that have a clear picture of your child's face and all information you have. Height, weight, age, last seen, etc.
- Post your flyers everywhere kids meet. Phone booths, soda machines, local hangouts, grocery stores, anywhere and everywhere that will let you.
- Put out the word asking that your teenager check in, just to let you know they are safe. You may want to offer an alternative contact of an adult you both know and trust.
- When you get home, call your local paper and ask if they will run a description and picture of your child. Tell them you will either bring them a flyer or email the information. Whichever option they prefer. Beg if you have to.

**Regarding teen runaways, know that:**

·40% of runaways return home at their own initiative

·50% stay within 1-10 miles of home

·60% percent of runaway episodes last 1-3 days

·Forcing a child to come home without resolving the problem is likely to result in another runaway incident.

·The majority of teenagers who run do so because of a problem they perceive to be unsolvable

I hope this helps,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:42PM (-07:00)

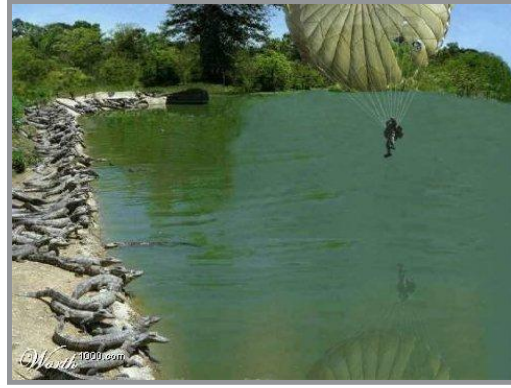
## When it's O.K. to use the "F" word--

Saturday, August 09, 2008



Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at  
05:38AM (-07:00)





She now wants to move out...

Monday, August 11, 2008

Our 16 yr old daughter has been acting out in all of the ways you have described in the introduction. She now wants to move out, go on welfare and share an apartment with a guy have never met who is a few years older than her. We have asked her to leave our home for a week this summer because we had reached our limit. She stole from us yet again a significant amount of stuff. She came back wanting to really try to make things work but now wants to move out. What do you suggest?

.....

Hi H.,

I would say 16-years-old is a bit young for moving out. You are legally responsible for her until she turns 18. So if you had written this 2 years from now, I'd write a totally different answer.

First and foremost, simply work through the 4-week program for now. You are currently only into week #1. Only do one session per week – and be sure to watch ALL the Instructional Videos.

Having said that, I think you should call her bluff... if you don't help financially the going will be tough. Don't argue, flatter her a bit (that will catch her off guard), and tell her that she is intelligent and mature and that if she is confident she can manage on her own, then you will support the decision. Tell her that you won't give any financial help and that you will miss her terribly, then sit back and wait. By leaving the decision-making up to your daughter, you will have given her a way to back down without losing face. She is likely to find the responsibility a bit scary, and when she realizes you are giving her the freedom to make her own decisions – she might think twice.

If she does choose to leave - she will be back sooner than later (with a bit more humility this time).

Do not save her from making poor choices. It is the only way she will learn life's lessons.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:04AM (-07:00)

## School Behavior Problems

Monday, August 11, 2008

Hi Again Mark,

It's the beginning of week 4 and I've just finished reading through the last sections. We've continued to make great progress at home and the positive behaviours we've started to see from our son are nothing short of amazing. I'm sorry to ask the same questions, but I still don't know how to handle a couple of situations. I hope you can help me with some specific ideas.

As I mentioned, our son will often become over-excited in social situations and be either annoying, offensive and/or aggressive. This can even escalate into a violent tantrum. We can now handle any meltdowns at home quite well with poker face etc. and mostly ignoring him until he's calm. This has worked really well and we even got an unprompted apology the other day (unheard of!). My question is: if he's in a situation where I can't ignore or leave him alone because he may harm/disrupt others, how do I handle it without giving him any intensity – especially if it usually means we may have to physically remove him from the situation?

My second question is about school again. Unfortunately since I last emailed, he was reported for hurting another boy, given a suspension and told that one more physical incident will mean being expelled. I guess all I can do is stick to the program and hope that doesn't happen. But also as I mentioned, he comes home each day with a report of how he's performed against a set of 'goals' - ie key areas he MUST improve in – if he can't, again he will be asked to leave the school (which I think will destroy him). He is given a 'score' of 1 (good) to 3 (bad) each day for: sitting still, listening without interruption, working in a group and respecting others. He is still constantly getting 3s. Should I let this run its course? Or should I impose consequences for constant bad scores as they essentially mean he's behaving badly at school?

Thanks so much again

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Here are some ways to start dealing with problems or potential problems early, when there is still time to work with teachers and administrators to make school a tolerable place for your son.

1. **Listen when your son talks**— Kids don't answer the question "How was school?" because they know parents only want to hear good news. Parents should reconnect with what it really feels like to be in school -- the uncomfortable desks, the stuffy classrooms, the disengaged teachers, the work that is either too easy or too hard. Think about what it really feels like to be your child at school. Ask questions about feelings, and really listen to what he or she says. Don't be quick with a pep talk and a pat on the back. Having someone to listen, without judging, can help defuse some of the frustration that might later erupt in dangerous behavior. And if you listen closely, you may be able to figure out other ways to lessen your child's emotional burden.
1. **Be realistic about your child's abilities**-- Pushing and motivating and holding high expectations can drive some children to be all they can be, but it can drive others straight into anxiety and depression. Would you want to work at a job, day in and day out, where you always had to be at the top of your abilities, handling things you weren't quite on top of and hoping things turn out alright? Kids can't quit, and they have very little recourse in terms of demanding better working conditions, but they can find all sorts of ways to act out their anger and despair. Be honest and compassionate when considering what sort of classroom your child will learn best in and what sorts of supports he or she will require. Academics are important, and it's not wrong to make them your biggest concern, but emotional support and feelings of mastery are important, too.
1. **Be respectful of authority yourself**-- We all know how important it is to fight for our children and be strong, effective advocates. That struggle may lead us to conclude that some teachers and some administrators are not worthy of our respect, and their judgment is subject to doubt. But be very, very careful how you communicate that to your child. You may think the message you're giving is that grown-ups can be wrong, and you will always stick up for him, and she should value herself even when others criticize. The message your child receives, though, may be that it's okay to be disrespectful to teachers, the rules don't apply to her, and you will clean up every mess he makes. That's an attitude that's sure to cause major problems at school, and beyond -- if you teach a kid to question authority, sooner or later he's going to question yours.
1. **Volunteer at your child's school**—Being a presence at your child's school -- whether you volunteer at the library or help in the lunchroom, serve as class parent or staff special events -- pays numerous dividends. It gets you known by the administration in a non-adversarial context. It lets your child know that school is important to you and a place you want to be. It gives you an opportunity to observe what goes on in that building, from the conduct of the students to the morale of the teachers. If you can't spare the time to volunteer during the school day, attend every Home and School Association meeting you can, and be sure to show up for Back to School nights and teacher conferences. When school personnel get to know you as an involved and interested parent, they're more likely to be your ally when problems come up.

1. **Request an FBA**— If the school is sending home complaints about your child's behavior -- and expecting *you* to do something about it -- put the ball back in their court by requesting a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). This will force school personnel to really think about your child's behavior, not just react to it. An FBA examines what comes before bad behavior and what the consequences are for it; what possible function the behavior could serve for the child; and what sorts of things could be setting him or her off. If a child finds classwork too hard or a classroom too oppressive, for example, getting sent to the hallway or the principal or home could become a reward, not a punishment. Conducting an FBA and writing a behavior plan based on it is probably the best way to head off discipline problems. If teachers and administrators refuse to go along with it, you might need to do a little behavior analysis on *them*.

A *Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)* is an attempt to look beyond the obvious interpretation of behavior as "bad" and determine what function it may be serving for a child. Truly understanding why a child behaves the way he or she does is the first, best step to developing strategies to stop the behavior. Schools are required by law to use FBA when dealing with challenging behavior in students with special needs, although you may need to specifically push for it. The process usually involves documenting the antecedent (what comes before the behavior), behavior, and consequence (what happens after the behavior) over a number of weeks; interviewing teachers, parents, and others who work with the child; evaluating how the child's disability may affect behavior; and manipulating the environment to see if a way can be found to avoid the behavior. This is usually done by a behavioral specialist, and then becomes the basis for a Behavior Intervention Plan.

**Examples:** A student may act up frequently and be sent to stand in the hallway. But, a FBA may find that the student acts up only during times when a lot of writing is required in class, and that he has documented difficulty with fine motor skills. The misbehavior serves the function of getting him out of written work. Supports to reduce the amount of writing needed and tools to make writing easier may eliminate the behavior in a way that escalating punishments never will.

There is no hard and fast rule regarding what sources of information an FBA includes to lead to some hypothesis about the function of a particular behavior. Let's start by considering what type of information we need and then we can think about how to obtain the answers to these questions:

- Does the behavior occur frequently or infrequently?
- Does the behavior occur in all settings or just some?
- Does the student have the ability to control the behavior or will she need some supports to control it?
- Does the student have the necessary skills to engage in the desired behavior or is there a skills deficit that needs to be addressed?
- Does the student understand the expectations for behavior?
- If the student does have the skills to perform the desired behavior, does the student have the motivation to perform it?



·What is the "payoff" is for the behavior -- e.g., does the student get to avoid some unpleasant activity or get to escape some setting?

To answer the above questions, the school team will generally need to employ a variety of techniques. An FBA should not be based on one person's report or observations. It really requires multiple participants and techniques. When it comes to techniques, in addition to direct assessment of the student and recording of behavior ABC-style, the team will probably also use:

·Scatterplots or matrices tailored to the student that plot the relationship between instructional variables and student behavior over time and situations

·Structured or semi-structured interviews with the student (if appropriate), the student's parents, and school personnel involved with the student

By the end of the data collection process, the team should have sufficient quantitative data on the behavior and qualitative data to develop some guess or hypothesis about what function(s) the behavior serves for the student. It is these hypotheses that will lead to the intervention. There is an important point to be emphasized here: an FBA does not lead to a definite answer or "proof" of anything about the behavior. It leads to an "educated guess" which will then be tested or explored.

Problem behavior typically falls into one or more of three general categories:

- (a) behavior that produces attention and other desired events (e.g., access to toys, desired activities)
- (b) behavior that allows the person to avoid or escape demands or other undesired events/activities
- (c) behavior that occurs because of its sensory consequences (relieves pain, feels good, etc.)

The antecedents and consequences are analyzed to see which function(s) the behavior fulfills. Problem behavior can also serve more than one function, further complicating the matter. The interview, combined with direct observation of the behavior is what most people use in determining the function of the behavior. This is fine when the data collected on the antecedents and consequences is clear. Most of the time this is sufficient in determining the behavior's function(s).

For example, to determine the function of screaming, we could arrange for attention to be given to the child each time she screams and measure how frequently screaming occurs. We could also make demands on the child, terminating them each time she screams and measure how frequently it occurs. In addition, we could leave the child alone and measure how often screaming occurs. If screaming is more frequent when attention is given, we hypothesize that it occurs to get attention. If screaming is more frequent when demands are made, we can assume that screaming has served to let the person escape or avoid demands. Finally, if screaming is more frequent when left alone, we can assume that it is occurring because of its sensory consequences. This third method should be reserved only for situations in which the functions of behavior are not clear through systematic and direct observation.

#### **Sample Functional Behavior Assessment—**

Student Grade Date

Person Completing this checklist \_\_\_\_\_

1. Current Challenging Behavior

This can have as many descriptions of the challenging behavior. Example: Check boxes with Inconsistent behavior, sleeps in class, irresponsible, lacks motivation, etc. Boxes are checked for all that apply.

2. School History

A. Academic Skills

Strengths -----

Deficits -----

B. Previous Behavior Interventions and Results (on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being poor and 10 being very effective). Put the number on line or leave blank if that intervention has not been attempted in the past.

Some examples of the check boxes for this area are: Incentives for appropriate behavior, work etc., Verbal Praise and Attention, Independent work in private , low-stimulus area, parent contacts, etc.

3. Strength Areas

A. Social Skills

- Gets along with peers
- Gets along with adults
- Sense of humor
- Likes to please others
- Helpful
- Generous
- Sensitive

B. Natural Talent/Skills

- Mechanical Skills
- Carpentry Skills
- Artistic
- Creative
- Athletic
- Music

C. Coping Skills

- Works well independently
- Verbalizes concerns
- Sorts through options before acting

4. Learning Style Description

Consider Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Environmental Conditions, Instructional

Presentation/Style. Indicate + or -

Overheads, blackboard  
Oral Presentation  
Hands on Tasks  
Manipulatives  
Small Groups  
Low visual distractions  
Low auditory distractions  
Examples

#### 5. Medical/Physical Conditions That May Have Effect on Behavior

List of medical conditions

#### 6. Positive School-Based Situations

Include classes or situations that are successful, along with those that the student enjoys.

Has positive friends, Positive role models, works independently, good support system, ext.

#### 7. Difficult School Based Behavior (Academic and Social)

How long can the student tolerate the difficult situation before he/she reacts with a challenging behavior?

Situation Frequency/Duration of Tolerance

Large group situations  
Auditory distractions  
Tasks above ability level  
Comparisons to others  
Direct confrontation  
Too much responsibility  
Changes in environment  
Poor Follow through, lack of consistency

#### 8. Antecedent Behaviors and Conditions

Early signs of frustration or anger, what happens just before the challenging behavior?

Verbal Signs:

Loud voice  
Swearing  
Mumbling  
Whining  
Complains of Headache

Non-Verbal signs:

Increased activity  
Head down  
Poor eye contact

Sad face  
Hunched over  
Disheveled appearance  
Withdrawal from activities and peers  
Decline in grades  
Sudden change in friends  
Moodiness  
Physical complaints  
Environmental signs:  
Teasing  
Direct confrontation  
Lack of attention  
Poor follow through by adults  
Increased activity in environment  
Increasing demands/responsibilities  
Substitute teacher  
Running out of medication/not refilled  
Change in family situation

#### 9. Possible Functions of Challenging Behavior

What kind of need may have been met by the challenging behavior?

Gain attention  
Escape responsibilities  
Coping with stress  
Coping with pain  
Coping with disappointment  
Dealing with depression  
Dealing with lack of sleep

I hope this helps,

Mark

P.S. I've attached a PDF from the Child Study Center that will provide more info on FBAs.

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:30AM (-07:00)

## I am not alone in this "battle"...

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

Dear Mr. Hutten:

I cannot tell you how excited I am to begin implementing your parenting techniques. I just ordered the Online book, and have read up to page 30 (end of Session #1).

I have to admit, it was nice to read that I am not alone in this "battle" with my son. He just turned 15 last month, but his attitude and demeanor started to change in February/March, when he met his girlfriend... His grades started dropping (he had been an A/B student until this point). He failed a semester of Spanish, then a semester of Biology; didn't care

about anyone else, has ONLY cared about himself, but yet, he cannot accept responsibility for himself. Like you stated, he blames EVERYONE else for his actions. So, yes, everything I have read so far, I can truly relate to.

My son is in counseling. I wonder now if that is where he needs to be. His father and I are divorced (have been for 10 years - I remarried 3 1/2 years ago). My son has issues at his dad's, with his dad's girlfriend. Dad likes to take the girlfriend's side on everything. I have always been the disciplinarian, dad has always been the "toy" and the "giver"... I do know that my son has been hurt by his dad's actions and the fact that dad never stood up for him in certain instances at their house. So I wonder if he has some deep down hidden anger. If he does, isn't that something that he really needs to talk to a counselor about, so he can overcome what he feels? I'm very confused about counseling now.

When my son first started to fail in school, he was grounded for a full marking period - 6 weeks. In hopes that would get his attention and he would pick his grades up. He was grounded with NO privileges, had to sit at the kitchen table, on a hard wooden chair, no t.v., no phone, etc. He passed the next marking period. BUT... started failing again the last semester. So, in all, he sat for 18 consecutive weeks at the kitchen table, without privileges. And unfortunately, he seems pretty proud of that.

The thing that brought me to this point, and prompted me to find you online, was the fact that he had snuck out his bedroom window (2 days before we were to leave for vacation, mind you), and my husband had to call me at work and tell me my son wasn't home. I immediately left work to go back home. He went to his girlfriend's house (big surprise). (he also admitted that this was not the first time he had snuck out the window, he had been doing it quite frequently). But later admitted to me that the girl AND her mother, both lied to me when I called to see if he was there. Needless to say, he is once again grounded. Obviously, I don't have any respect for the mother now, and I am not thrilled with the daughter either. The whole family has been a bad influence on my son, and I hope these issues are also discussed in your book. I thought if I limited my son's time with the girl and her family, that would be better than the argument/fight I would be in for by telling him that he was forbidden to spend time with them at all. Like you said, I can't control him.

I feel like I have been doing the majority of the things stated in your book. Except for the "poker face". That one tends to be a little difficult for me. But I have remained calm during our "talks". I have already figured out that I get absolutely nowhere with my son when I raise my voice. I fall under the "Indulgent" parent category, and my son would fall under the "Scapegoat" category.

I'm sure I will be in touch with you again, during this process, asking for help, guidance, etc. I would like to thank you for putting your information/experiences together in a book for us parents who are dealing with out of control teenagers. I feel a bit of relief already, just after reading the first 30 pages. I will follow your instructions, one session per week, and will prepare myself for the "it will seem worse before it gets better" period. I know it's a struggle, but he is my child and I love him to death. I would/could NEVER turn my back on him. As parents, we have to take the good with the bad, and I'm hoping this is as bad as it will get, but I won't hold my breath...

Again, thank you, and I look forward to our home life getting better with the help of your step-by-step book.

Sincerely,

M.,  
(A desparate mom)

.....

Hi M.,

Be sure to watch ALL the Instructional Videos that are in the online version of the eBook.

I can see from reading your email that you will have some areas to work on.

Thanks,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:35AM (-07:00)

## Our problem is that he is never home...

Wednesday, August 13, 2008

Hi J.,

**== > I've responded throughout your email:**

Mark,

To catch you up and again some suggestions for guiding us (parents). M\_\_\_\_\_ was successfully released from probation end of July. Just as we predicted, he has been out of control. He is 17 1/2. He has joined up with some friends who are known to buy/do weed. He has been linked to buying/doing weed as well. Not sure how "hooked" he may be--this is all hear say. He is told if he is not home by parent set curfew, he is not to come in the house. He may sleep in the shed if he does come home. We have let him in several times when out with his g'friend as she does call with their where abouts and are home soon after. We do trust her and she has confided in us about some of the things M has done/is doing. We have told him also that the security system is on, and he may not come into the house until a parent is home (we deleted his pass code).

**== > This is all good. Great job!**

He still is maintaining his job (Dad or g'friend or g'ma drive). He broke the power cord to his lap-top so has no internet (we lock ours). We confiscated his cell (he paid for phone we pay service/he pays "overages"), and the state suspended his driving license due to too many points. I will be DCing his phone service permanently this week as soon as I can get to the store. We (parents) do not plan on signing for his license when he is eligible (he believes we will "cave"). Told we would not drive him to/from school, he could take the bus, or travel with friends. He was told he can buy his own power cord when he has the money and can get one at retail, we would not loan him the money, or order one

thru the internet. I stopped doing his laundry due to foul language aimed at me.

**== > I think you hit another home run here!! Wow!**

As incentives, he can "earn" back me doing laundry and driving him to/from work by not swearing and making his curfew for 3 consecutive days (has not done it yet). Can "earn" back license and use of a car by attending school, no swearing, picking up after himself, and coming in by curfew, passing drug screens (I bought these but so far has refused them), and must do this for 6 weeks and ONLY then with GPS teen tracking system on the car. (We know you recommend 7 days max, but we would be held legally responsible for anything happening to him/our vehicle and if he wants a car sooner than this, he can buy his own. **Is this on track?**)

== > Most definitely. You are a great role model for other parents who have trouble with the "tough love" concept. Before I read on ...I want to say something at this point. Even though things may be far from perfect – can you imagine how bad things might have been had you not made your son accountable on these important issues?

Our problem is that he is never alone/home. He is with his g'friend or not home. He refuses to talk to us about the above. We can't even tell him the consequences because he starts yelling/swearing. We try to discuss him moving out in 6 months, but again, yelling. We find it impossible to tell him anything positive/and "I love you" when we don't even see him. **How do we get our message to him?**

== > I think you have bigger fish to fry than "swearing" at this stage of the game. He is an adult. Shift to helping him make plans to move out. Put it in writing – short and sweet – and let him know he has a deadline to be packed up and moved out.

Also, last night, he missed curfew (1/2 hour), started calling cell phones, house phones, knocking on the bedroom windows, and ringing the doorbell. The phones we can turn off, but we have to get up early for work, and have a younger child who really needs to be sleeping. Husband opened the door, and M barged in when told to stay out. **Any ideas on keeping him out besides police involvement?** The local police have told us they would make us allow him into the house as he legally lives there.

== > I want you to begin to focus on him moving out at this point. All the other stuff is water under the bridge. Here's what one single father did who was in the same boat as you:

1. He told his son he had a deadline to be moved out (the day after his 18th birthday).
2. One week before the deadline, he took his son apartment shopping.
3. His son didn't like any of the apartments – so Dad said, "Do YOU want to pick – or do you want ME to pick?" ...The son picked.
4. Dad helped his son move – and even paid the first 2 months rent.
5. Lastly, he told his son he is always welcome to come home for a visit – but can no longer live there. Dad also said, "In the event you get evicted for not paying your rent, there is a Mission - The Christian Center on Main Street - that will take you in temporarily."

End of story.

This father was not being cruel – quite the opposite. He was a good student of Online Parent Support and knew exactly what he had to do to “foster the development of self-reliance” in his son.

The latest parenting challenge is dealing with emerging adults who have no intention of leaving the nest. Many 18 to 29-year-olds either return home after college or they've never even left home. The media refers to them as "Boomerang Kids." Parents are worried that their kids won't leave home.

This new phenomenon is highlighted in the movie "Failure to Launch." Matthew McConaughey plays Tripp, 30-something bachelor whose parents want him out of the house. They hired Paula (Sarah Jessica Parker), an interventionist, to help him move out. Paula has a track record of successfully boosting men's self-confidence to cause them to want to be independent.

Interestingly, this story line is not as far-fetched as it may seem. Young adults are indeed becoming more difficult to coax out of their comfy childhood homes. Since the '70s, the number of 26-year-olds still living at home has nearly doubled! Here are the top four factors contributing to this change:

**They Are Unprepared**—They are overwhelmed or unmotivated to live independently. They would rather play it safe by occupying the family home, playing computer games, and delivering pizza.

These kids often grow up living the life of the privileged. Here well-meaning parents provide their children with all the amenities congruent with an affluent lifestyle. The parents are focused on doing more for their children than what their parents did for them—at the expense of keeping them dependent. Kids don't move out because they've got it made!

When your financial generosity isn't combined with teaching kids how to become self-sufficient at an early age, we cannot expect them to automatically possess adequate life skills when they reach legal adulthood. How will they gain the skills to confidently live their own life, when they haven't had the opportunity to do things for themselves?

**They Are Cautious or Clueless**—They are committed, but unsure how to discover their ideal career path. They approach college with the same trial and error mindset their parents had only to find out that it no longer prepares them for today's competitive world.

Parents do their kids a disservice by waiting until they are 17 or 18 before initiating career-related discussions. In our dynamic society where change is a daily diet, this is much too late! It's best to start young, at age 13.

This stage of development is the perfect time to begin connecting the dots between what they love to do and possible career options. It can take years to prepare for the perfect career. Beginning early will help teens maximize their opportunities in high school and make college a much better investment.

**They Have Personal Problems**—They don't have effective life coping skills, have failed relationships or are grieving some other loss or wrestling with a challenging life event.



In "Failure to Launch," we learn that Tripp's parents indulged him largely because the woman he loved died and he hadn't gotten over his loss. When Tripp fell in love with Paula—the new girl of his dreams—his self-sabotaging habit of dumping a girl before she can get too close got reactivated. Finally, his friends intervene and Tripp eventually faces his demons, to everyone's delight.

If your teen is struggling emotionally, don't make the mistake of thinking it will somehow magically get better without an intervention. Tough love requires that you insist your adolescent get professional help so that he or she can move forward. If you don't know how to have that kind of conversation, consider getting help from a parenting expert.

**They Have Mounting Debt—**They've accumulated significant credit card debt and moving back in with their parents is a way to pay it off.

According to the National Credit Card Research Foundation, 55% of students ages 16-22 have at least one credit card. If your teen falls into this group, make sure you monitor spending together online. Helping your teen understand how to budget and manage credit cards will be important for handling a household budget in the future.

Kids can't learn to manage money if they don't have any, or if parents always pay for everything. If your offspring moves back home, I recommend you charge a nominal amount for room and board. As an adult member of your household, it's important for your young adult to contribute to household chores and expenses.

If the purpose of your child's return home is to pay off bills or a college loan, have a realistic plan and stick to the plan to make sure your young adult moves out of the house.

**Determine Goals and Stick to Them—**Most parents enjoy having their children visit and will consider offering some short-term help. However, indulging an adult child's inaction does not help your son or daughter begin their own life. If your child defaults on your agreement, be willing to enforce consequences, to help him or her launch into responsible adulthood.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:59AM (-07:00)

## Son refuses to go to school...

Thursday, August 14, 2008

"My 14 year old son refuses to go to school but otherwise is a good kid. How can I make him do school work? I'm sorry...my son is 15 1/2 yrs old and attends an online Private School. He says he can't "force" himself to do it....."

.....

Kids love to learn. Learning is as natural as breathing to them—they absorb every single thing that happens! They learn through play, they learn from the behavior of the kids and

adults around them, they learn from their own experiments. By all rights, going to school, where there will be new experiences, many kids, and a chance to master powerful skills like reading and math, should be exciting and fun for them!

Their minds don't function well unless this bottom line condition of being welcome and appreciated is met. At school, they need to know that their educators like them and think they're special. They need to know that they won't be bullied or made fun of on the playground or in the hallways. They need encouragement, high expectations, and a good deal of fun. Play, which is the language and work of young kids, is still deeply important to kids of school age. The more they are allowed to play in their learning activities, the faster they absorb information and new skills. At home, kids need kindness, affection, and some measure of one-on-one time with their moms and dads, even if it's has to be as little as a five-minute snuggle before going to sleep every night or the ride in the car to the Boy Scout meeting once a week.

There are several basic ideas about helping kids learn that aren't well understood in our culture. In fact, they're not well understood in most cultures of the world. For schools to foster learning, and for moms and dads to support their kids, we grown-ups need to see that these learning needs of kids are met both at home and in the schools. Here are a few of the key concepts that aren't yet well-understood:

- **Kids learn best through play and hands-on activities.** The best teacher is experience, experience, experience! We need classrooms in which kids are doing things together, experimenting, and teaching each other what they've learned. In particular, free play without competition or pre-set rules is a great builder of kids' intellect, imagination, and confidence. Jumping on the beds at home, chasing around the house, and wrestling and pillow fights (the kids win, of course!) are the kinds of personal, physical play that lift kids' spirits and create enough fun that they can manage to stay hopeful even when days at school aren't inspiring. If life feels like drudgery, learning won't take place. So free play is vital. It keeps your youngster's spark of hope and interest alive!
- **Kids need large amounts of physical affection and closeness.** Closeness fuels their confidence and frees their minds of worries about whether or not they're OK. If they're unsure about whether they're OK, they can't concentrate on learning.
- **Kids need the freedom to make mistakes and ask questions** without fear of shame or belittlement. Mistakes and "failures" teach as effectively as successes, as long as a youngster continues to be respected.
- **Kids need to feel loved**, or at least understood and respected, in order for their minds to be clear enough to learn.
- **Kids's keen sense of justice demands that they and others be treated thoughtfully and fairly.** Fairness, to kids, means limits but not anger, boundaries but not belittlement, facing problems but not attacking people for having problems.
- Schools are not set up to help kids with the tensions that keep them from learning and getting along. This is a job we moms and dads need to do. It's a very hard job, one that was never done for us. It feels all wrong to allow a youngster to cry on and on without fixing anything, without sending him to his room or insisting that he pull himself together. But listen. **Listening heals.** Listen your way through a big cry or tantrum once, *without* trying to "fix" his feelings or solve the problem, and you'll see how well it works to clear your youngster's mind and restore his sense of closeness to you.
- **The huge need kids have for one-on-one attention while they learn is natural.** It's the school environment, where so many kids need to compete for the attention of just

one adult, that's not natural. Kids' needs feel bothersome to moms and dads and to educators, not because the kids are out of line, but because our society is out of line. Policymakers and citizens haven't yet decided to give young kids enough adult attention in school, and moms and dads enough support at home, to meet natural human needs for support and attention. When schools are genuinely supportive to kids, we'll look back at present class sizes, at the lack of support for educators, and at the lack of services for kids experiencing difficulties in learning, and think of conditions in the year 2000 as primitive indeed!

- What helps immensely is something we've always been taught to avoid at all costs. If you can sit close by while your youngster has a good cry about school, or a tantrum about not wanting to do homework, your youngster will do the work of draining some of the bad feelings that have paralyzed him. **Emotional release helps kids focus their attention and regain their ability to be hopeful about learning.** Your youngster won't sound reasonable while he cries or rages. He'll believe very strongly in the terrible feelings he's having. But surprisingly, the crying and the chance to make sure you know how bad it feels inside has a deeply healing effect. So try to keep from arguing and reasoning with him, and stay close while he "cleans the skeletons out of the closet" with his tears and his bleak or angry thoughts. He'll finish. The longer he has been able to cry, the more improvement you will see in his ability to concentrate and to believe in himself.
- **When a youngster isn't able to concentrate or to learn, there's usually an emotional issue that blocks his progress.** It feels bad on the inside when you can't think! It feels scary on the inside when you can't do what's expected of you, and you don't know why or what to do about it! This is the position kids are in when they can't write a story, can't memorize their times tables, or can't sit down to their homework. They feel upset, and often scared. They also feel alone.

When we moms and dads see our youngster caught in upset around learning, it's usually infuriating. Our youngster's problems make us feel tired and worn. Our thoughts are something like, "By now, he should be able to do school work on his own! Why do I have to get into it?!" We badly want our youngster's problems to go away so we can get a little peace!

### **Assisting Our Kids, Supporting Their Schools**

**Almost every youngster will experience some difficult times in school.** And almost every parent feels upset, helpless, and/or angry when these troubles surface. Our strong love for our kids and our frustration with a society that doesn't offer much support to its young people makes it hard to think clearly when our kids are having a hard time. There are a few guiding principles that many people find helpful when they hit a hard patch

- **First, listen to your youngster about the difficulty.** He's feeling hurt and upset, and he can't solve the problem in that state. See if you can be warm and positive enough to help him have a big cry or a tantrum. Kids can often work through their feelings of victimization and come up with their own solutions to troubles at school, if they have the chance to offload the feelings in big, hard cries at home.
- **If he wants you to approach a teacher or other students, listen well before you attempt to find solutions.** A teacher, principal, or student needs to have *their* side of the story heard before they will be able to change a viewpoint or cooperate toward a fresh solution. If things aren't working well, they feel badly about it (even if they're acting like they don't). Fresh, workable behavior comes only from a mind that's been freed a bit from its troubles by a good listener, a listener who cares about all the parties involved. Your thoughts are important, and working toward a solution is

important. But listening well to the others involved is as vital as tilling hard-packed soil before you attempt to plant a new seed.

- **It doesn't help to blame your youngster, yourself, or the teacher for the difficulty.** Blame wastes energy and makes others feel worse than they already do. Because blame spreads bad feelings, it gets in the way of the fresh thinking and cooperation you'll need in order to build solutions. **You aren't to blame.** You're working as hard as you know how that this difficult job of parenting. **Your youngster isn't to blame.** He's doing the best he can, and is carrying burdens he hasn't told you about yet, or doesn't know how to shed yet. **The teacher is not to blame.** No matter who has made mistakes, the heart of the matter is the lack of support and assistance for everyone involved.
- **Let your youngster be in charge of the solutions.** *After* your youngster has shed big feelings of upset, and *after* you've spent some time just being close to him without trying to solve the problem, ask him what he wants to do. Listen carefully. There may be a role you can play in advocating for him with the teacher or helping him talk with his friends. **But don't assume that because he brought his feelings to you, that he wants you to take charge of the situation.** Many times, kids can think of how they want to take charge after one or several good cries.
- **Problem-solving goes better if we find a listener, too!** When our kids struggle, we feel as frustrated and disappointed as they do! When they meet with unfairness, we want to storm and rage until the threat to them is gone. When they seem to be unable to help themselves at home, we aim our frustrations at them, driving them further into their shells of hopelessness. In short, when our kids meet trouble, we feel troubled too. To be good allies and problem-solvers, we need someone to listen to us, perhaps again and again, to how we feel and to the things we've tried. Someone listening to how angry or disappointed or exhausted we feel freshens our communication with our kids, their friends, and their educators. Our problem-solving effectiveness is 100% improved if we decide to find a listener and let them hear our fears and our frustrations before we try to help!
- We live in a society that doesn't value its kids or the people who work with them. There is talk of the importance of education, and many skilled and good-hearted people working in that field, but too little funding and respect are funneled toward schools. In most schools, human caring and teaching expertise is spread far too thin. You, your youngster, and your youngster's teacher are all stressed because learning conditions aren't optimal. **Constructive action means to look for people's strengths, call on their good intentions, and perhaps to look for additional help.**

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:16AM (-07:00)

## Emotional Bullying

Saturday, August 16, 2008

Hi Mark—

I want to start by thanking you again for your continued support and constant flow of information on your website. I have just completed the program and have seen positive changes in my 11-year-old son at home. He still continues to CONSTANTLY ANNOY others and put them down. He does this to his friends and other children in our neighborhood. He has been tackled two times this summer because of his mouth. I do not know what to do. I know that he is constantly putting down people because of his own

self-esteem. We are trying hard to follow all steps of the program. I review them several times a week. Please let me know if there is something else we can do to help him not to make fun of people and feel better about himself.

Thank you

J.

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Hi J.,

What you're referring to is a form of "emotional bullying." Psychologists used to believe that bullies have low self-esteem, and put down other people to feel better about themselves. While many bullies are themselves bullied at home or at school, new research shows that most bullies actually have excellent self-esteem. Bullies usually have a sense of entitlement and superiority over others, and lack compassion, impulse control and social skills. They enjoy being cruel to others and sometimes use bullying as an anger management tool, the way a normally angry person would punch a pillow.

**All bullies have certain attitudes and behaviors in common.** Bullies dominate, blame and use others. They have contempt for the weak and view them as their prey. They lack empathy and foresight, and do not accept responsibility for their actions. They are concerned only about themselves and crave attention.

**Bullies are not born that way, although certain genetic traits are often present.** Some children's personalities are naturally more aggressive, dominating and/or impulsive. Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) are more likely to become bullies. However, having such inborn traits does not mean that a child will automatically become a bully. Bullying is a learned behavior, not a character trait. Bullies can learn new ways to curb their aggression and handle conflicts.

**Bullies come from all backgrounds.** Researchers have not been able to find a link between bullies and any particular religion, race, income level, divorce, or any other socio-economic factor. Girls are just as likely as boys to bully and abuse others verbally, although boys are three times more likely to be physically abusive.

**There are different types of bullies produced in different types of homes.** There are seven kinds of bullies. Among them are the **hyperactive bully** who does not understand social cues and therefore reacts inappropriately and often physically. The **detached bully** plans his attacks and is charming to everyone but his victims. The **social bully** has a poor sense of self and manipulates others through gossip and meanness. The **bullied bully** gets relief from his own sense of helplessness by overpowering others.

**Bullies are often victims of bullies themselves.** 40% of bullies are themselves bullied at home or at school. Research shows that a victim at home is more likely to be a bully at school. The reason may be that when a bully watches another child appear weak and cowering, it disturbs him because it reminds him of his own vulnerability and behavior at home.

**Bullies have immature social skills and believe other children are more aggressive than they actually are.** If you brush up against a bully, he may take it as a physical attack and assault you because "you deserve it, you started it," etc. Research indicates that bullies

see threats where there are none, and view other children as more hostile than they are. The hyperactive bully will explode over little things because he lacks social skills and the ability to think in depth about a conflict.

**A bully's parents may be permissive and unable to set limits on their child's behavior.**

From early on, the bully can do whatever he wants without clear consequences and discipline. His parents may have been abused themselves as children and view disciplinary measures as a form of child abuse. While their lax style may have been fine for an easy-going, older sibling, it will not work on this more aggressive child. This bully may be allowed to dominate younger siblings and even take over his entire family - everything will revolve around his agenda.

**A bully's parents often discipline inconsistently.** If his parents are in a good mood, the child gets away with bad behavior. If the same parent is under stress, he or she will take it out in angry outbursts against the child. This child never internalizes rules of conduct or respect for authority.

**Self-centered, neglectful parents can create a cold, calculating bully.** Since his parents do not monitor his activities or take an interest in his life, he learns to abuse others when no authority figure is looking. His bullying can be planned and relentless, as he constantly humiliates his victim, often getting other children to join him.

**A bully has not learned empathy and compassion.** The parents of bullies often have prejudices based on race, sex, wealth and achievement. Other people are just competitors who stand in the way. Their child must always be the best in sports or academics, and others must be kept in an inferior position. A University of Chicago study suggested that bullies watch more aggression on television and in family interactions. Aggression is rewarded and respected, and humiliating others is tolerated. Compassion and empathy seem like weaknesses.

In order for the behavior to be bullying, your child must be abusing another child physically, verbally or socially not just once, but repeatedly. There must be an imbalance of power: your child must be bigger, stronger or more powerful than the other child. However, the power can be "social power." In that case, your child uses his power to exclude the other one from cliques and activities. The other child must have asked your child to stop bullying him or her. The victim has to feel threatened and has to believe your child will keep harming him.

A bully will first either blame the victim or act like the victim himself. Many cry and say the other child provoked the situation. But if a teacher, bus driver or other person in authority has told you that your child is repeatedly terrorizing another, accept responsibility that your child may have a problem and that you are willing to fix it.

First, agree to work on the problem. If the victim's family wants your child kept away from theirs, agree to that and keep in contact with them once a week on the phone for a few months.

Create a less violent, angry atmosphere at home. Don't let your child play violent video games or watch television shows in which people act mean to one another or use violence. Use a rational approach to discipline and try not to lose your temper in front of your child. If the house rules vary from day to day, make them consistent and follow up if your child breaks them. Don't use physical punishment or humiliation to discipline your

child.

Read aloud books about bullies. Let him take care of a pet. Invite other children over to your house and monitor them. Let them play in a non-competitive way.

Enroll your child into groups that encourage cooperation and friendship, such as religious social groups or Scouts. Have him volunteer to learn the joy of helping others.

You are not alone. Other parents have had this problem and fixed it. One parent said the best thing that ever happened in their son's life was when he changed from being a bully into a compassionate human being.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:43AM (-07:00)

## Grounded for 2 months?!

Saturday, August 16, 2008

Hi Mark,

I'm asking for some advice regarding a certain situation with my son. I had given you a little background in an e-mail I sent you earlier this week. My son is 15, has a girlfriend, and since she has come into his life, my son has changed quite a bit.

The girl and her family are not the kind of people I care to have my son spending time with. She has an older brother, and he is a very negative influence on my son. He lives the "thug" life, acts like a thug, and I simply don't trust him. He is soon to be 18, lives at home with his family, doesn't have a job, and just recently received his GED. He's very "sneaky" in the way he acts.

I have my suspicions that this boy has influenced my son with things like drinking, cigarettes, and possibly marijuana. I have no proof, but I have my suspicions.

My son is grounded at this time for sneaking out of his bedroom window and going to his girlfriend's. The mother and girlfriend both lied to me when I called the morning I realized he wasn't in his room.

This being said, my concern is when school starts on August 25th, and my son is back into his "school routine", he will be associating with his girlfriend once again. I told him he would be grounded for 2 months, and he told me that he WON'T be grounded during school. He will come home at 5:30 for dinner (this has always been a non-negotiable rule with me) but other than that, he will do what he wants after school. He said if my husband or myself goes to school to pick him up, he will just "wave at us and walk by".

I know I need to be careful what I say about his girlfriend and her family, because I don't want him to rebel in an extreme way. If I were to tell him that he is forbidden to spend time with them, I'm sure he will do whatever he has to do, to get away from me/us, and go over there.

What is your advice for this situation? I'm really dreading school starting.

Thank you,

M.

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Hi M.,

Grounded for 2 months?!

No offense, but it doesn't sound as though you watched all the Instructional Videos in the online version of the eBook?

All parents dread the day when their son or daughter comes home with a new love interest. There will be many relationships that you know will not work out. And while you might be tempted to share your opinion with your child, I would suggest you didn't.

One point I can't stress enough is to never tell your child you disapprove of his girlfriend. This will only make him that much more attracted to her. If he asks your opinion, you can say that the girl isn't the person you would have chosen for him, but it's his life and he has to figure that out for himself.

If you keep telling him how bad of a person his new fling is, she could turn out to be your daughter-in-law. I know this from first hand experience. My wife hated my daughter's high school boyfriend - even forbid her from seeing him. All this did was make her want to see him even more. At one point my daughter said to me, "When my boyfriend and I would have disagreements, I would not see that the relationship wasn't working. I would only see that I had to make it work to keep mom from knowing she was right about him all along."

You have a Romeo & Juliet phenomenon on your hands that will need to be diffused (if not, they will work harder at sneaking rendezvous behind your back).

Unfortunately, if your son wants to be with someone -- he'll find a way, no matter what you say or do. Parents can only guide their children in the right direction and hope for the best. If they do a good job, their children will make the right decision all on their own.

Since you will not be successful at keeping those two apart, you must adopt a philosophy of "if you can't beat 'em - join 'em." In other words, they should be able to see one another within limits, and you decide what those limits are. Maybe your limits will look something like this:

- They can be together at your house only during those times that you are home and can monitor their behavior (if not, she has to leave)
  
- Or you could schedule some activity for them in which you would be a distant chaperon (e.g., take them to a shopping plaza and tell them to meet you back at the coffee shop in exactly one hour)



· Or your son is allowed to go over to her house for a designated time period (if he violates the time limit, there is a consequence that is commensurate with the "crime")

Figure out a way for your son to see his g-friend in a way that will keep him safe. This is the best you will be able to do. Otherwise, you are likely to get sucked into weeks – if not months – of power struggles.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:58AM (-07:00)

## Avoiding/Dealing With Temper Tantrums

Sunday, August 17, 2008

Hi Mark,

My mother S\_\_\_ talked to you and then bought your program for my wife J\_\_\_ and I. We have two boys Sammy 8 and Andy 4 (turns 5 Aug 20). Both of our boys have tons of energy and are very strong-willed. We're concerned about Andy's behavior however, we're optimistic that the program will also help Sammy. We've worked through Session 1 and 2 and have experienced some positive results despite the opposition at times. Our new "outlook" has not been popular especially with Sammy.

Andy can be having a wonderful day and then suddenly "snap" and go into another place where he is defiant, annoying, and ignores any type of authority or discipline. He will lose one toy after another and not seem to care. He will not stay in a time out. He's aggressive and borderline abusive with our dog, his brother etc. He can get very physical. He gets this Jack Nicholson (shining) look on his face. He even does the eye roll. It's like a switch has been thrown and nothing can turn it around. Yesterday the "switch" was thrown over getting dressed. He wanted to put on his pajamas. Jackie said "no" that he needed put on clothes for the day.

He will be entering kindergarten this fall (three weeks). Although he is not interested in the academics, he's big for his age, extremely athletically talented and very social. Until summer, he had been attending a pre-school three days a week. All of his caregivers are totally convinced that he is ready to go even though he is young. We're very concerned about his behavior once he starts school.

We were first alerted of his behavior weirdness while he was at preschool. The caregiver lost control of him completely as he trashed the place, hurt other kids and scratched, and pinched her. Up until then, they praised his behavior and never had any issues with him. He was a great, mellow, happy baby.

The 2nd red flag involved Andy attending a two week day camp for 5 yr. olds. We thought this would be a wonderful social opportunity for him to prep for kindergarten. It was an absolute disaster. Two young, rookie counselors had 12 kids. We barely made it through the first 4 days before the 3 day weekend. Although the program was totally unorganized, Andy was defiant, showed no respect for the counselors and was "not nice" to his fellow campers. We pulled him after the 1st day of week two when I got a call that Andy was

completely out of control and hurting other kids and the counselors.

It seems as though if there's any hint of lack of control, he'll do whatever it takes to escalate the issue, or get control himself. Once he's in the zone, it seems that nothing will get through to him. He doesn't compute consequences to promote good behavior. This throws him into rage and he acts out even more.

Sammy has always demanded an extreme amount of attention and because he's older and very athletically gifted as well, he's been in the spot light. We've really tried to give both of our kids equal attention and praise. It seems as though we've been over the top on the praise. Sammy and Andy fight and play wrestle quite a bit and it always leads to someone upset or crying. Sammy is not very nice to his little brother as he sees him as annoying. Andy of course provokes and pushes all of the right buttons.

So here's an introduction to our challenges. I'm sure you'll have questions, but we're stuck on what to do in the heat of the moment, when he's in the zone. He could care less if we take away all of his toys. Last night, I led him into the car, buckled him in and told him that he was going somewhere else to live, that he obviously didn't want to live with us, respect us or listen to us. I was prepared to drive down to the police station, when he finally snapped out of it, started crying and climbed out of the car and ran back into the house. He quickly picked up the board game that he had dumped got ready for bed and seemed sincerely sorry for how he had behaved. However, Jackie informed me that he was unaffected this morning and refusing to put on his clothes.

There you have it. We'd love some feedback. We're excited about your program and we want to get our kids back on track. Thanks for listening.

D.

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Hi D.,

So we're talking basic temper tantrums here. Here is a list of ways to avoid and also deal with temper tantrums.

1. Allow a grace period before an activity ends - This is one that I have started doing constantly with our grandson, Jake, and it has worked wonders for us. Carry a timer or even use the alarm on a cell phone. Tell your kid for example "OK you have 5 minutes left to watch TV before bed. When the alarm goes off then time is up". I normally play the alarm to let Jake know what it will sound like before I set it.
1. Allow options! - Give a little leeway and allow your kid to make some choices for himself. Ask "Do you want to wear the green shirt or the blue shirt today?" Allowing your kid to be active in choices when appropriate will help to prevent power struggles.
1. Count - If your kid is starting to get worked up step aside with your kid and say "Let's count". This will help to distract your kid and refocus his mind on something else. Count with your kid until he calms down. Then you can calmly discuss the situation that caused a tantrum if needed.
1. Distraction - If a situation is getting touchy and you know that your kid will throw a tantrum redirect their attention immediately. If it's raining outside and the kid is throwing a tantrum to go outside think of an indoor activity that your kid loves and

suggest it instead.

1. Do not reward - Don't reward your kid after a tantrum. They may associate tantrums with ways to get better treats.
1. Don't ask! - Avoid arguments that will lead to tantrums by NOT asking your kid to do something that they have to do. Don't ask "Ready to brush your teeth?" Instead say "OK time to brush your teeth now."
1. Establish a reward system for good behavior - Set up a chart with your kid's name on it and squares for each day of the week. Buy some stickers that your kid likes. When your kid has a good day have him place a "reward sticker" on the square for that day. You can offer different rewards for different amounts of stickers. We offer Jake a prize day where if he has had good behavior for the week then we will get him a "prize" while he is at school. We have done toys (small toys like cars, trucks, etc), movies, and books.
1. Establish a routine and stick to it! - This can help eliminate many many nighttime tantrums. Once your kid learns what is expected to happen there will be less of a struggle and less tantrums.
1. Ignore - Sometimes its best to ignore a tantrum that is being thrown for the sole purpose to attract your attention. Tell your kid that when he decides to act appropriate then you will pay attention. After the kid has finished the tantrum then provide the attention wanted.
1. Never give in - Giving in to a tantrum will only encourage the behavior and will result in the kid throwing tantrums more often. If your kid knows that you will cave if he throws a tantrum then it will most likely happen anytime you refuse to give something wanted.
1. Remain Calm - I know it's hard to do, but if you remain calm then it will help to shorten your kid's tantrum and help keep you sane. Spanking or yelling at your kid while he is throwing a tantrum will only make the tantrum worse and cause you to become madder.
1. Reward positive behavior - Positive re-enforcement of good behavior is a good way to prevent tantrums. Kids will want to make you happy and if you are super excited about good behavior they will try to repeat. "Great job sharing your toys!"
1. Tolerance - How many times do you say NO to your kid each day? Avoid fighting over minor things to help prevent tantrums.

Remember to ignore the disapproving glances by others in the stores if your kid is throwing a tantrum. Handle the tantrum appropriately and remember that they have either been in the same situation with their kid or its been so long since they had to deal with a tantrum that they have forgotten what its like. It will take some time but being consistent with how you handle tantrums will help to eliminate most if not all of them in the future!

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:55AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Stealing Money

Sunday, August 17, 2008

Mark,

I have just got to the bit about fair fighting and positive framing, really interesting and I

can see how it would work a lot of the time but one of the biggest areas of conflict between my son and me is money, however much he gets he always wants more and will steal from me or his older brother and sister to get it. He has just stolen £370 from his brother's bank account by taking the card and pin no from the post. I can see how I can frame the action positively but how can I make a win win solution for him. He has had his allowance stopped until the money is paid, he is taking some out of his savings (controlled by absent father) but even so he will be weeks without money while he pays it back, I know he will take any opportunity he can to steal but I don't see how i can give him money even if he was willing to do chores, that seems disrespectful to his brother who worked two part time jobs to get the money. Help?!

C.

.....

Hi C.,

There are many things that moms can do to address stealing after it has occurred.

- Apply consequences. Moms should decide what the specific consequences are for stealing, and apply them every time stealing occurs. Moms should inform their teens of these consequences before they are used. Consistency is very important.
- Confront quickly. Just as it's important for moms not to overreact, it is also important that moms don't under-react. When moms find out that their teenager is stealing, they should confront and deal with the stealing immediately. The longer stealing is allowed to continue uncorrected, the more difficult it is to correct later on.
- Remain calm. When moms discover that their teenager has stolen something it is very important that they don't overreact. Moms should keep in mind that all teens take things that don't belong to them at one time or another. Moms who become overly upset may instill feelings of guilt and shame in their teenager, which can affect self-esteem. Moms should try to remain calm instead, and should deal with stealing behaviors in as matter-of-fact a manner as possible.

Here are some suggestions:

==>Correct the behavior. Correcting means making some kind of restitution. For example, if a teenager takes a candy bar from a store, correcting would involve requiring the teenager to return to the store and return the candy bar (if it isn't half-eaten), or if the candy bar can't be returned, paying for the candy bar. If the teenager has no money to pay for what he or she has taken, moms can loan the teenager the money and then subtract it from an allowance, or require that the teenager do chores around the house to earn the money to pay for it. It might also be a good idea for moms to require that the teenager apologize to the person from whom the item was stolen. Sometimes this is very difficult for teens, so moms may not want force the issue if their teenager is unable to make an apology. It is, however, very important that the teenager go along on the trip to make the return. It is very important that the teenager assume responsibility for correcting the misbehavior.

==>Apply natural consequences. After correcting the behavior, consequences should be applied. Having to do extra chores around the house to earn the money to pay for a stolen item is an example of a natural consequence. Another example is not allowing the teenager who stole the candy bar to have sweets for a certain period of time.

- Don't interrogate teens or force them to self-incriminate. Moms should not force their teens to admit to stealing. Teens often lie to protect themselves. If moms aren't pretty sure that their teenager has stolen something, they probably should not apply consequences. Instead, they should let their teenager know that they are skeptical, and express hope that their teenager will be honest with them.
- Don't shame teens for stealing. Moms should try not to make their teens feel guilty for stealing. They should also try not to call their teen's names, for example a thief or a liar. Such tactics can be very damaging to teen's self-esteem. Instead, moms should let their teens know that they are disappointed in their teen's behavior, but this does not mean that they are bad people. They should then apply consequences and treat the situation matter-of-factly.
- Help teens find ways of earning their own money. Moms should make sure that their teens have some sort of regular income. If teens have money of their own to spend as they wish, they will be more likely to buy what they want instead of stealing it. Teens can earn money by doing chores around the house, etc.
- Label the behavior. It is very important that moms call the behavior exactly what it is. For example, moms shouldn't call taking (without permission) what doesn't belong to one's self as "borrowing." Teens who are able to understand the concept of ownership should be told that they are "stealing" when they take something that does not belong to them.
- Provide adequate supervision. Moms should make sure that they know what their teens are up to. Teens who are not monitored closely by their moms tend to be more likely to steal and to engage in other problem behaviors.
- Seek professional help for persistent problems. If stealing becomes a chronic or significant problem, moms should contact a mental health professional for assistance.
- Understand why the behavior occurred. Different teens steal for different reasons. Because of this, it is important for moms to try to find out why their teens steal. Asking a teenager why he or she has stolen something will probably not give moms the answers they need. They may need to look at what's going on in the teenager's life, what personal problems the teenager may be having, etc. Once moms find out why, corrective measures can be taken to eliminate or minimize the behavior. For example, moms could set up an allowance/chore system for a teenager who stole because he has no spending money of his own.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:31AM (-07:00)

## I looked in and found a knife...

Sunday, August 17, 2008

Dear Mr. Hutten,

Thank you for your reply. It seems to be working for now and she hasn't asked about it again. I routinely look through my daughter's room. If she has drugs or alcohol in the house, I take it away and tell her that it is not acceptable for her to have these things. Last night she left her dresser drawer open and I looked in and found a knife, a large sharp kitchen knife, which is not from my home. My first thoughts are that she is holding on to it for someone or she stole it (but why?). It is a weapon and I think I should take it to

the police. If it were a gun, I would take it to the police. I haven't spoken to her about it yet. What do you suggest?

The other major issue with our daughter is school. She failed so badly at her last high school that they do not want her back and I think it would be best for her to make a fresh start. However, her motivation is zero. I want her to take control of her schooling and choose where she wants to go but I worry that she is not capable of making this decision. Should we set a deadline for her to get organized and if she doesn't we take over?

H.

.....

Hi H.,

**Re: drugs or alcohol?** Please refer to the section of the eBook entitled "Read These Emails From Exasperated Parents" [Session #4; online version of the eBook; look for "drug abuse"]. This problem is covered in that section.

**Re: What do you suggest?** I would just confiscate the knife.

**Re: school.** Heather, this too is covered in the eBook. Please refer to the same section listed above ["Read These Emails From Exasperated Parents"; Session #4; online version of the eBook; look for "Poor Academic Performance"].

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:42AM (-07:00)

## Best of all, this has made our marriage stronger!

### Sunday, August 17, 2008

Dear Mark,

Had to write to tell you that we have completed your course. Other parents need to know it is not an easy change to make but as you explained it was well worth it. I know that we will still experience some bumpy times but we are feeling a bit more confident as we continue to practice the skills. Our household is certainly seeing the difference and we feel more prepared to deal with our 15 year old daughter as she progresses through these teenage years.

A lot of what we learned has also enabled us to utilize it with our two sons who are in their 20s as well. One thing I think we especially learned was that it is never too late to be an assertive parent and be a change agent in our children's lives. You do have to recognize when you aren't being assertive and willing to make the needed changes for your sake and theirs, too.

consequence to our daughter's choice to runaway we are comfortable in knowing we did what we had to do for her. We understand that she is scared, that she is making excuses for her actions and that she is looking to blame others for what she did. She also "hates us and does not want to live with us" but she is more cooperative with us these days.

**If you have any advice or guidance for us regarding this probation meeting we would appreciate it.**

She has gone so far as to say she wasn't running away she just wanted to get out of the house. What she doesn't quite get yet is that she left after I was in bed, after curfew, and to her 15 year old "boyfriend's" home where a man (not her "boyfriend's" father) lives with the "boyfriend's" unmarried mother and the "boyfriend's" 6 younger brothers. This man just got out of prison, and is currently on probation, for cocaine dealing and possession. When we were phoning all of her friends and we called the boyfriend's home we were told she was not there. That is were the police picked her up.

She is in love so nothing else matters. Being brought home by a county officer, having us search through her belongings, being told she is now in the "system" and if she does it again she will also put her friends in jeopardy did not phase her too much that day. In the days that ensued, she did open up to us a little bit more although the "boyfriend's" feelings are still more important to her these days.

After reading your autonomy section under Summary Points, the muddy waters cleared for us even further. We have re-instituted family meetings with ALL members of the family as much as possible so that no one is singled out. We have established a family support system and letting all of them know there is no shame in asking for help when you need it. Running away will not solve anything. House rules, fair-fighting, decision-making, etc. have been established. We continue to do your assignments and are getting better at them, too.

Best of all, this has made our marriage stronger! We remind each other about the "arts" of saying yes and no. We work together on earned privileges and consequences. We've learned more than we want to know about "underground punk". Most of all, we are hopeful that there will be living left for us when the kids all leave home because before that we felt drained. They do all leave home, eventually, don't they?

Just kidding, as we do believe assertive parenting will accomplish that. It is interesting, though, how you can fall into passive or aggressive parenting easily if you are not on guard. It is easier to see it in other parents first. Thanks again for your program and knowing that you will be there for us in the days, weeks and months ahead.

If there is anything we can do to "give back" please let us know. We do plan to "pay it forward" and steer parents to your program if they ask us how we managed to cope with our out-of-control teenager.

Sincerely,

G. & J.

.....

Hi G.,

Thank you for your kind words. Parents like you give me the inspiration to continue in this line of work. You are a good student and a great parent! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

***Re: If you have any advice or guidance for us regarding this probation meeting we would appreciate it.***

Just remind yourself that you are doing this out of a loving, caring heart ...remind yourself that you are saving your daughter from some very significant ***long-term, major pain*** by holding her accountable -- even though the accountability will cause her some short-term, minor pain ...and remind yourself that "assertive" parents reap great rewards in the long run.

You are simply doing the right thing,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:57AM (-07:00)

## He quit his job for some reason...

Monday, August 18, 2008

Let me say you and your ebook have been a big help to me. I can use some advice. My son took his mother's credit card, charged up about 200 dollars worth of stuff. He admitted to doing it. He had a job at the time and I was of course going to make him pay for the charges. In the mean time, he quit his job for some reason. I have taken his car away from him and am in the process of cutting his cell phone off. He is 17 and I am sure his next response will be that he just won't go back for his senior year of high school. That would devastate me, but I feel it is now his choice, and if he drops out of school, it's welcome to the real world. What is your opinion on all this? Let me admit to having been an overindulging parent over the years.

One more question. I took his car because he is responsible for making the payments. What should I do about giving it back to him? I know you say 1 day, 3 days, 7 days as far as punishment but this is a little different. I told him not to quit his current job until he found another one but he did anyway. Thanks for any input.

.....

Hi D.,

***Re: What is your opinion on all this?*** You are exactly right on track (I guess you just needed to hear it from someone else). Is it possible that you are taking on too much responsibility? And if so, is this helping - or making matters worse?

He can ride his bike ...or walk ...or take a bus ...or get a friend to drive him to look for work. As soon as he finds another job, he gets his car back.

Mark



My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:00AM (-07:00)

## Manipulating Parents After Divorce

Monday, August 18, 2008

Dear Mr. Hutton,

I just finished reading session 1. I know my daughter has been over-indulged and she possesses most of the personality characteristics you describe as a result of this style of parenting. I definitely want to stop the "free handouts" and foster self-reliance in my daughter as well as my other two children. The problem is I am recently divorced and my ex-husband does everything you describe in the permissive, self-indulgent parenting style. I think he is doing this to be "popular" , "win our daughter over" and to make up for feelings of "guilt" he must have for committing adultery. He is currently taking me to court to gain full physical and legal custody of this 12-year-old daughter only. I believe this is too reduce his financial support to me. We have two other younger children together ages 9 and 5 years old. I also have a restraining order against him. My point in telling you this is that I cannot discuss parenting issues with my ex-husband.

My question is when I refuse to buy "handouts" for my daughter she does not care or have a need to earn money because she can receive the "handout" from her father on her next visitation day. For example, I offered to buy her basic jeans (she needed new pants to wear) at Walmart but she wanted "designer jeans" from Macy's. Her father bought her the "designer jeans" at Macy's on his next visitation day with her. This daughter also wants to live with her father. I feel this is because she can "run free" and have minimal rules as well as have all the material things she wants. I really need your program because she has become a "nightmare" for me to parent. She is using the divorce to manipulate what she wants from everyone. Is there any way I can foster self-reliance in my children? My counselor told me that no parenting program I use will work because my ex-husband undermines it with his permissive style of parenting. I want to have "hope"! Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

A.

.....

Hi A.,

When parents disagree about discipline, the underlying issue is often a conflict in parenting styles. Parenting styles develop in a complex process from childhood history to adult knowledge and experience. Because parenting styles are rooted in individual belief systems, polarization and conflict are common when parents' styles differ.

The most common conflict occurs between parenting couples who have authoritarian and indulgent styles. The authoritarian parent is adult-centered and high in control efforts. The indulgent parent is child-centered and low in control efforts.

While these two styles are opposites at their core, they can find common ground. The way to resolve this conflict is for both parents to take one step to the more balanced and healthy authoritative parenting style.

The authoritarian parent can move toward authoritativeness by becoming more child-centered. This parent should take time to listen to the child and invite the child's input into family activities and decision-making. He or she should seek out knowledge of normal child development to better understand the child's abilities and needs. Finally, this parent should spend more time with the child in mutually pleasurable pastimes, finding ways to enter the child's world and understand the child's point of view.

The indulgent parent can move toward authoritativeness by becoming more demanding of the child. The indulgent parent should practice saying 'no' to the child. He or she should seek out knowledge of effective child discipline strategies and use them to address misbehavior. Finally, this parent should focus on helping the child build skills of self-control and adult and peer interactions. Teach the child to respect the authority of adults in his world; to understand consequences and control impulses; and, to develop good relationships with peers.

Conflict between authoritarian and indulgent parents will not subside without effort from both parents. It's not so much about compromise as it is about learning from each other. Belief systems about parenting can remain intact while both parents learn new skills

Kids learn to manipulate their parents following a divorce, gaining more control of their situation in a two-household family.

The majority of adolescents actively interpret their parents' behaviors in order to manage relationships to their perceived advantage. The kids gather and interpret info about parents, dodge questions, engineer images of themselves, parry parents' probes, maneuver between households, and cut ties with parents to exert their own authority.

Several strategies are used:

- Cutting one parent completely out of their life; the process allows the child to control when and where they have contact with one of the parents.

- Moving from one home to another. Children will often move into the home of the parent who is less controlling in order to punish the other parent or to escape a situation they do not like.

- Withholding info from one parent to avoid punishment or solidify a relationship. Since there is less communication between parents following divorce, the child can gain upper hand by controlling the info flow.

None of these options would be available to a child in a single household with two parents.

It's surprising how many children learn to manipulate their parents after a divorce. Some parents have the attitude that their children would never do so, but it is common. They may see it as a viable avenue to get their own way. Young children do it as well as older children. The difference is the way they go about it and what they are attempting to get out of the deal.

It is understandable why parents would fall for this though. After all, they don't want their children to be traumatized by what has taken place. They want to see their children happy and thriving in their environment. Make sure you are consistent with the rules you have set for your children though. They may come to you and say a later curfew or hanging out with friends without adult supervision makes them feel better. This is just a ploy to get you to let them do what they want to do.

You should expect your child to attempt to test the limits though. They may tell you they want to go live with their other parent when you don't give in to them. This is going to hurt you and they know it. Stand firm and tell them you are sorry they feel that way but that you are sticking by your decision. If you can work out similar rules at both homes with your ex this issue will be eliminated for both of you.

It is true that children can have conflicts in life that are a direct result of the divorce. For example your child may have drop in their grades or changes in their attitude. While you need to understand this, they need to know that the divorce isn't an excuse for letting things go. They still need to be doing their homework and they still need to be respecting you. They need to help out at home and do what is asked of them without problems.

Make sure you understand the difference between what your children need and when they are attempting to get one over on you. They may find your defenses are down after a divorce and use it to their benefit. Don't be too hard on your children if you find out this is what is going on. Let them know you are disappointed though and that they aren't going to be allowed to continue doing it.

One of the reasons why children are able to successfully manipulate their parents after a divorce is due to the parents feeling inadequate. They don't want to let their children down any more than they feel they already have. They also have a fear that their children won't love them as much as the other parent if they don't give in to their desires. That isn't the reality of it though.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:05PM (-07:00)

## He can't seem to handle anything not going his way...

Tuesday, August 19, 2008

Hi Mark

Thank you for all that information re school – it's enormously helpful.

I have to ask if you might be able to help with a question about public 'meltdowns'. I don't know how to handle this situation and it seems to be getting worse. He can't seem to handle anything not going his way or anyone daring to do something other than what suits him or benefits him. We had another one on the weekend where at football he was

put into a position he didn't like for the first quarter. At the end of the quarter he yelled rudely at the coach to move him. The coach then quite rightly and calmly put him on the bench for the next quarter. He sat there crying and fuming and carrying on about how unfair, everyone's got it in for him, why me, coach hates me etc. etc. Tried to explain it was only about everyone taking their turn in all positions etc. but then he just became aggressive and insulting to me. It's a typical scenario. Do I just implement the 'when I want something from my child' strategy? (I want him to calm down and be sensible.) Then do I just ignore him if he doesn't? Or punish him after? I really need guidance on this one.

Thanks again,

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Re: *Do I just implement the 'when I want something from my child' strategy?*

**Yes.**

Re: *(I want him to calm down and be sensible.)*

**No. "If you choose to \_\_\_\_\_ (be specific here, for example: hit, push, yell, etc.) ...then you'll choose the consequence, which is \_\_\_\_ (pick the least restrictive consequence first)."**

Re: *Then do I just ignore him if he doesn't?*

**No. Follow through with the consequence.**

Re: *Or punish him after?*

**Yes (actually you'll be disciplining rather than punishing).**

**You may be making this more difficult than it needs to be. Do you get upset when your son gets upset? If so, this is adding fuel to the fire (remember to use your poker face). Simply use the strategy entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" exactly as it is laid out.**

**Keep up the good work,**

**Mark**

.....

That's clear thanks Mark.

And I apologise, I should have mentioned our successes. Last week, our son received a merit award at school assembly for his 'amazing improvements' in class. He was also sent to the headmaster to show him a piece of creative writing he'd done, which was beautiful, detailed and above all way beyond what he was asked to do (he had been doing absolute minimum, and nowhere near what he is capable of). The headmaster wrote him a note of congratulations, which he proudly brought home. Mark, I just want you to know this is completely unprecedented. I believe it is entirely due to the changes

we've made at home by following the program . As you mentioned, it is going to take some time to turn around behaviour that has become habit over 11 years, and I'm sure there are continuing challenges ahead, but we really want to thank you this program, and the insight and support it provides.

Best regards,

L.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:57AM (-07:00)

## I am heartened by the progress so far...

Tuesday, August 19, 2008

Hi Mark,

It is pleasing to see that K is modifying his behaviour - nothing else worked, but this program certainly does! He chose to test whether the consequences would be enforced, and when he lost his phone for 48 hrs for the second time in a week, instead of punching the wall, he ended up crying. And I could remain calm, and acknowledge it was distressing, but that the good news was, it never had to happen again, if he followed the few basic rules that were set.

I know it has to get worse before it gets better, and I am heartened by the progress so far.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:35AM (-07:00)

## To Snoop or Not To Snoop?

Tuesday, August 19, 2008

Should you secretly snoop on your teenage child? I am not talking about where you're open with them about your surveillance. I am talking about clandestine snooping: Reading their e-mail ...checking their text messages ...reading their diaries ...eavesdropping on their conversations with friends ...searching their room ...searching their jeans -- all in secret.

.....

Probably. The obvious argument for secret snooping is that you might discover something serious that you would not have known about otherwise. Maybe they are having sex with much older partners. Maybe they are selling drugs. Maybe they are thinking about suicide.

Secret snooping has a definite downside. It is dishonest. And if they find out - which they often do - kids feel betrayed.

I don't like snooping. I especially don't like secret snooping. That said, I am a believer in not being too trusting of your teenagers. Mom & dads regularly underestimate their kid's

involvement in risky behavior. And teens do all they can do to keep those activities hidden from us. Fortunately, there are many things you can do before resorting to secrecy.

The first is to keep an ongoing relationship with your kids. They may at times push you away, but don't take it personally. Keep going back for more. The closer your relationship with them, the more likely they will share their world with you.

Second, when they go out, ask questions. The parent of a teenager needs to become an expert at asking very specific questions: Where are you going? Who are you going with? What will you be doing? The more specific details you demand, the less room they have for risky behavior.

Third, tell them what you consider serious risks and why - what you really think about sex, drugs, drinking.

Your last tool is open surveillance - in effect, snooping, but with their knowledge.

Snooping is a personal decision based on what you as a parent are comfortable with. Too little oversight risks giving too much wiggle room. Too much risks full rebellion. But you may want to be open about it. This is surveillance they may hate, but they know you are doing it.

Ultimately, snooping is one of those "do-the-ends-justify-the-means" deals.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:55AM (-07:00)

## Conduct Disorder & The "Safety" Issue

Wednesday, August 20, 2008

Factsheet: Conduct Disorder (CD)

### What is CD?

CD is a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in kids and adolescents in which the rights of others or basic social rules are violated. The youngster or adolescent usually exhibits these behavior patterns in a variety of settings—at home, at school, and in social situations—and they cause significant impairment in his or her social, academic, and family functioning.

### What are the signs and symptoms of CD?

Behaviors characteristic of CD include:

- Serious rule violations, such as staying out at night when prohibited, running away from home overnight, or often being truant from school.
- Non-aggressive conduct that causes property loss or damage, such as fire-setting or

- the deliberate destruction of others' property.
- Deceitfulness or theft, such as breaking into someone's house or car, or lying or "conning" others.
  - Aggressive behavior that causes or threatens harm to other people or animals, such as bullying or intimidating others, often initiating physical fights, or being physically cruel to animals.

Many youth with CD may have trouble feeling and expressing empathy or remorse and reading social cues. These youth often misinterpret the actions of others as being hostile or aggressive and respond by escalating the situation into conflict. CD may also be associated with other difficulties such as substance use, risk-taking behavior, school problems, and physical injury from accidents or fights.

## How common is CD?

CD is more common among boys than girls, with studies indicating that the rate among boys in the general population ranges from 6% to 16% while the rate among girls ranges from 2% to 9%. CD can have its onset early, before age 10, or in adolescence. Kids who display early-onset CD are at greater risk for persistent difficulties, however, and they are also more likely to have troubled peer relationships and academic problems. Among both boys and girls, CD is one of the disorders most frequently diagnosed in mental health settings.

## What does the research say about CD?

Recent research on CD has been very promising. For example, research has shown that most kids and adolescents with CD do not grow up to have behavioral problems or problems with the law as adults; most of these youth do well as adults, both socially and occupationally. Researchers are also gaining a better understanding of the causes of CD, as well as aggressive behavior more generally. CD has both genetic and environmental components. That is, although the disorder is more common among the kids of adults who themselves exhibited conduct problems when they were young, there are many other factors which researchers believe contribute to the development of the disorder. For example, youth with CD appear to have deficits in processing social information or social cues, and some may have been rejected by peers as young kids.

Despite early reports that treatment for this disorder is ineffective, several recent reviews of the literature have identified promising approaches treating kids and adolescents with CD. The most successful approaches intervene as early as possible, are structured and intensive, and address the multiple contexts in which kids exhibit problem behavior, including the family, school, and community. Examples of effective treatment approaches include functional family therapy, multi-systemic therapy, and cognitive behavioral approaches, which focus on building skills such as anger management. Pharmacological intervention alone is not sufficient for the treatment of CD.

CD tends to co-occur with a number of other emotional and behavioral disorders of childhood, particularly Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Mood Disorders (such as depression). Co-occurring CD and substance abuse problems must be treated in an integrated, holistic fashion.

### **Why are assessment and treatment important?**

Assessment and diagnosis of CD—or any emotional or behavioral disorder of childhood—should be done by a mental health professional, preferably one who is trained in children’s mental health. Any diagnosis must be made in consultation with the youngster’s family. The assessment process should include observation of the youngster, discussion with the youngster and family, the use of standardized instruments or structured diagnostic interviews, and history-taking, including a complete medical and family / social history. When assessing and diagnosing any childhood emotional or behavioral disorder, the mental health professional should consider the social and economic context in which a youngster’s behavior occurs.

Accurate assessment and appropriate, individualized treatment will assure that all kids are equipped to navigate the developmental milestones of childhood and adolescence and make a successful adaptation to adulthood. Treatment must be provided in the least restrictive setting possible.

#### **What can I do if I’m concerned about a youngster?**

- Consult with a mental health professional, preferably one who is trained in children’s mental health.
- Explore the treatment options available. Treatment must be individualized to meet the needs of each youngster and should be family-centered and developmentally and culturally appropriate.
- Find a family support group or organization in your community.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:56AM (-07:00)

## **He just says "ok" and then takes off...**

**Friday, August 22, 2008**

Hi T.,

**== > I’ve responded throughout your email below:**

T\_\_ and I joined your website for our 16 year old quite a few months back. Let me say this after having gone through many different programs for difficult teenagers, your program is very solid. We have told our current counselors and connections about it so that other parents may use your very good resources, too.

**== > Thank you for your kinds words.**

Our son is to the point now where he no longer argues about items (this should be a good thing). He just says "ok" and then takes off. He said that he really doesn’t need us as parents, he doesn’t need to do the chores or contribute anymore, and he just leaves early in the day and shows up after we’re asleep.

**== > You can file runaway charges. Also, if he’s violating curfew – that’s another legal charge that will need to go to court.**

We have gone through his room and removed his negative influences - computer,



clothing, accessories, electronic gadgets, etc. We left positive things, like a bed, desk, guitar (as an outlet), and normal school clothing.

**== > Did you include, "If you choose to be home by the designated time for a period of 3 days – then you get all your stuff back" ...?**

We have filed unruly and missing charges, and we're in a juvenile court diversion program. Both sides basically tell us that because he's not doing anything violent or really bad, the court is not going to do anything to him. Here's someone that knows how to ride the system (and seems to have lost respect for the system).

**== > That's true, but here's the upshot: You are protecting yourself from some potential liability issues. For example, if something bad happened to your son – or if your son committed a harmful act to others or their property, you will have solid evidence that you tried your best to get him "off the streets."**

Part of the problem is that his friends and their parents just give food, shelter, money, etc, because he is very charming to them. He misleads them about his situation to his benefit. We asked them why they do it, and they just say that they like doing it.

**== > Two points here: (1) Of course he misleads ...that's what all kids do. Don't worry about it. (2) Nothing is as comfortable as "home." So don't be fooled into thinking that he is escaping uncomfortable emotions associated with his poor choices. I can see that he is doing a class "A" job of convincing you that your disciplinary techniques are having no effect.**

Any advice where to go from here would be helpful. We are sticking with the program basics, and we are hoping it will kick in again.

**== > I think you'll need to kick it up a notch.**

**You could lock him out of the house – but he may just pound on the door and wake everybody up. Even if the cops showed up, all they would do is give him a short, meaningless lecture and tell you to let him in.**

**A better idea would be to ground him FROM his room. Find a way to keep the door locked (and only you have a key). Bottom line, he is – as you say – playing the system. He has a right to live in your house – but he does not have a right to have a private bedroom. A private bedroom is a privilege – a privilege that's EARNED by following house rules.**

One of questions is this - does the "no free handouts" cover school expenses and such?

**== > No. Basic needs are not fair game for confiscation.**

We wanted him to earn his tool money for his new vocation school, but he hasn't done (even though he says it means something to him). He says "not to worry about it" whenever we bring it up, and he's definitely not close to being ready in four days. He lost most all of his books at school last year, and we're making him earn that money (which he won't, we just shouldn't worry about it he says). Are we going too far in cutting off money for things like that? It's likely to affect his current enrollment, as they won't release his records to the new school without being paid.

**== > You are responsible for tool money, books, etc. But until he abides by house rules, he can sleep on the living room floor or on the family room couch. No guitar, no desk, no room (but clothes of course).**

He no longer wants to contribute and just go when/where ever; do we just accept that and let him live here until he's 18? We don't think so, but we're not sure where to go with someone that just takes off, doesn't contribute, and stays within the confines of the "system." Thanks for any help Mark!

**== > You are responsible for him until he turns 18. This does not mean that he has to live in your home until then, however. You may want to contract with one of these families that are willing to feed him and let him hangout in their homes. Maybe he could stay with an aunt or uncle ...grandparent ...family friend, etc.**

**But until then, withdraw all privileges (i.e., anything other than basic needs). And continue to complain to probation re: curfew violations, runaway, etc. The probation department is just like any other business. Complain long and loud enough – and they WILL take some action.**

**Mark**

**P.S. Do not doubt yourself during these tough times. Stay the course, and remind yourself that you are allowing your son to experience some short-term, minor pain now in an effort to save him from a lot of long-term, major pain later.**

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:33AM (-07:00)

## **Would it be better to let him learn rather than forcing my beliefs ...**

**Sunday, August 24, 2008**

**Mark,**

My 14-year-old son found himself a job in June. He works very long hours some days, usually in the hot sun. He gets up on his own, packs his own lunch and is very responsible. This is someone who has been and can still be quite defiant.

He has spent nearly all the money he has made. There is a small amount in savings for expenses he must pay soon. He loves to spend and buys a lot of his own meals and snacks. He has also bought things his friends already have. I buy him very little except for birthday and Christmas.

The problem is saving. I originally thought he should save more, but am giving up on the notion. It has caused too many quarrels and doesn't seem to be worth it. He says it is his money and he should get to determine where it goes. He will be paying for basketball shoes and driver's training and anything else coming up soon but will probably run out well before Christmas. He will not be working again until June.

Is he right? It is his money and he works hard for it. I want him to have good habits, but would it be better to let him learn rather than forcing my beliefs on him?

Loving, but frugal Mom

.....

Hi Frugal Mom,

Re: *Is he right? It is his money and he works hard for it. I want him to have good habits, but would it be better to let him learn rather than forcing my beliefs on him?*

Great question! And the answer is an unequivocal 'YES'. He's right.

You seem to be doing very well with him overall. Congratulations.

Pick your battles carefully. He will learn how to budget and manage money much better from first-hand experience rather than from motherly lectures.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:29AM (-07:00)

## Could he be bipolar?

Monday, August 25, 2008

Hi T.,

== > I've commented throughout your email below:

Hi Mark,

A couple of weeks ago I bought your program. Well things are getting worse ...my seventeen year old son is out of control.

== > As you may recall from watching the first few Instructional Videos, things do tend to get worse before they get better. This is not uncommon and should be viewed as "progress."

On June 25 one of his co-workers committed suicide (my son worked with him and knew him well) my son worked with him that day. Since then my son has started drinking while on medication for anger - anxiety ...two weeks ago the rage hit with his 23-year-old brother home from out west on vocation. It was really bad as he raged for three hours. Smashing stuff fighting with whoever would be in his way. A full-blown rage of no other kind. I told him in a calm state that the next time this happened I would call the police.

Today it happened again... he had been at the beach drinking and became agitated this carried home to a full blown rage where kitchen table was upset, coffee tables etc.... you get the picture. I called the police as he would not settle down. The officer with the help of friends was finally able to arrest him. He smashed the side window out of my truck as I

tried to leave the gateway shattering glass all over me. Tonight my worst nightmare is true my son is in a youth centre.

== > Good for you for calling the police. He may benefit from both a grief counselor as well as a drug/alcohol program.

Since he required stitches he was taken to the hospital by the police. The officer asked if he should be admitted and given an evaluation but was told by the doctor that was not necessary.

== > Uh Oh! He definitely needs a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation.

Tomorrow my son will be released with no repercussions only a bruised ego about being arrested (which he blames me for)... my son is a good kid except that he has always had anger issues. I have begged him to go to a counselor to no avail. What next and how do I deal with this... could he be bipolar?

== > This is why he needs an evaluation. A psychiatrist will need to rule out certain things before a proper diagnosis is found.

Tonight he told me after being arrested that it was my fault because I got him to take this medication and that He hates me because I called the police. As you know I love my son dearly and only want help for him. Please advise as soon as possible.

== > I'm guessing that he has been over-indulged for his entire life – and now that you are shifting to a more assertive parenting style, he is having difficulty adapting.

PS you said to find humour in the worst situations, well I did when the officer and my son were wrestling around on the pool deck. The officer was trying to get a grip on my son to hand cuff him when both of them ended up in the pool... imagine the scene. I figured that america's home video would have loved it. Other than that humour I need direction immediately.

**== > You should be in week #2 of the program. You've got 2 more weeks to go. Watch ALL of the Instructional Videos – and keep up the tough love. Oh ...and make sure your son gets an evaluation.**

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:34AM (-07:00)

## He just wants to hurt me...

Tuesday, August 26, 2008

My problem is this. Recently my ex-husband let our 14 y/o ride a 4 wheeler without supervision or helmet. He had a bad accident and in the hospital for 8 days. He knows I do not allow this but seems to let him do things like this. Of course you want to be with the parent that lets you roam free. I cannot get him to understand we need to be on the same page. I am willing to compromise, but he just wants to hurt me. I am not sure how

to handle this and some of the trouble I have with my son is from this. Any suggestions.

Thanks, M.

.....

Hi M.,

Parents who have significantly different child-rearing styles are more likely to have kids with behavior problems than families who have similar styles.

A parent who gives in to his kid's every demand in the hope of satisfying them almost always finds that the opposite happens: Instead of letting up, the kids continue to push for more and more, looking for a sign of how much is too much.

A similar thing happens if the parents cannot decide how to discipline and set limits on their kids. It's healthy for kids to see how their parents reach a compromise or settle a disagreement if it's done peacefully and effectively. But if the parents can't reach an agreement, the kid's behavior often gets worse as they search for the reassurance of stable boundaries to their lives.

In those situations, the main issue of using discipline to teach kids appropriate behavior gets lost in the battles between parents for an illusion of control. The kids become confused and respond by continuing to act out, both to assert their own power and to figure out which rules are really important.

It's not surprising that parents have differing views on the best way to discipline their kids. Working out those differences requires clarity and perspective. **Safety issues** (e.g., "...you have to wear a helmet") should be the first consideration. They also require the greatest amount of agreement from both parents.

Other matters can usually be resolved by agreeing on which parent will set the rules about particular issues. Even so, forming a united front on discipline is often more easily said than done. Here are some ideas that may help:

- **Be prepared for behavioral problems.** Remember that many changes in kid's behaviors are linked to their stage of normal development. Talk ahead of time about how each of you would handle these predictable situations. That way you'll have fewer conflicts when they occur.
- **Don't be trapped by your past.** That includes both your own childhood and the style of discipline you may have used in an earlier marriage. Look for ways to explore, with your ex-spouse, your unquestioned assumptions about disciplining kids. One good way to do that is to take a parenting class together. That does two things: It helps you realize how differently other people respond to the same situations you face as parents, and it gives you and your spouse a common base of information from which to develop your shared approaches to discipline.

If your ex will simply not work with you on any level, then bear in mind that a weaker parenting strategy supported by both parents is much better than a stronger strategy supported by only one parent.

Finally, your son will have to learn to operate under two different sets of house rules -- yours and your ex-husband's.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:59AM (-07:00)

## She gets very angry and frustrated when things don't go her own way...

Wednesday, August 27, 2008

Hi Mark

First of all thank you for your programme – from my (albeit limited!) experience we are finding it well constructed, full of common sense and very supportive.

I have a question of how to deal with an aspect of my child's behaviour in this fairly early stage of the programme:

We are implementing Week 2 (we started 3 weeks ago but my daughter was away for most of last week). Z\_\_ is the 2nd of 3 girls. The eldest is nearly 14, Z\_\_ is 11, and her younger sister is nearly 8. For a number of years we have gone through periods of time where Z\_\_'s behaviour has been very difficult. She gets very angry and frustrated when things don't go her own way, and we have put it down to "middle child syndrome", although (of course!) we try to treat them all very even-handedly. As these phases have come and gone, we have not taken much action to try to amend our own behaviour. Of course we have tried to analyse why the dynamic has been so difficult. Our eldest child has never been difficult, she is quietly self-confident, mature and quite a calm character. She is also very bright and repeatedly excels in everything she takes on – this in itself is a very difficult act to follow. The youngest still enjoys being the baby of the family, at the same time being very competitive and so always trying to emulate both sisters in both achievements and basic rights (such as bedtimes, etc)

Z\_\_ is a very different character, with different skills and personality. She is not academic in the same way as her older sister, but she is still slightly above the average in class achievements generally. She is a funny, articulate girl who has lots of friends, and is often the centre of the party. She wants to be an actress and is always a star in school drama and speech. At the same time she is quite a shy and not-very-confident person.

Over the last few weeks/months her increase in age (and therefore perceived independence) have lead to an acceleration of difficult behaviour. Having read everything in Weeks 1 and 2, plus a little of 3, I recognise now much of what is going on. She does crave attention of any sort, she goes out of her way to create an argument. We have been over-indulgent of her (well, all 3 really), not so much in terms of "stuff" but mostly allowing them a lot of slack on helping around the house and taking responsibility for themselves and their things. Difficult behaviour has also resulted in us treating her differently – mainly out of trying to avoid the fights but as I can see now, counter-productive. This has of course lead to accusations of us not loving her, the other two being favourites, she has no-one to turn to, etc. I'm sure you've heard all this before. Her behaviour is primarily initiating heated verbal arguments with my husband or myself, in

which she is extremely articulate if one-sided and ignoring many facts. She does also fight, mainly verbally but also some physical, with her sisters. She does throw things and has maliciously damaged a number of household items as well as sisters, although at this point we have not had to contend with major issues in this area. She has “run away” a couple of times, but this has been posturing more than anything and she has not left the square where we live. Obviously we are anxious that we resolve these issues before things become really destructive.

I am happy following the programme, which has given me a much needed boost in confidence about the path we have to follow. I can see that it will take time, but that with persistence and consistency we will get there. I have also seen that I am not always great at dealing with each situation in the best way/with the right precision of words, and so have missed opportunities already (hopefully I will learn fast!). However, what I would like your advice on is how we deal with the Post-Argument, calm, contrite discussion, which is initiated by her, where she is looking for help and/or an apology, and also probably using it as a guilt trip as well.

During these discussions I have tried to avoid:

1. responding too much to her accusations of our deficiencies
2. pointing out the exaggerations and sweeping generalities she applies (don't want her to lose face)
3. obviously – getting angry. My poker face is fairly well in place
4. arguing back (very easy for it to deteriorate into a slanging match again)

I have, however, tried to:

1. listen – to always be available to her, not to brush her off with “its way past your bedtime” etc
2. ask lots of questions about what she has said, to try to probe
3. try to reiterate that we do love her, we do support her, she can come to us with problems, etc

I have found that it is all too easy to get into “explaining” my side of a particular issue, in order to try to make her see a different angle. This tends to fail, and then risks becoming a row again.

She point blank refuses to believe that anything we do is with her interests at heart, and although secretly she may know this is not the case, she is resolute at the moment that everything we do is against her. She only picks up on the negatives, refuses to acknowledge any positives.

Should I enter these discussions at all? I don't feel very equipped to find a win-win resolution currently. One of the difficulties is that most of the issues are quite soft, emotional ones. There are few tangible, factual disagreements that we can easily work on together to find a solution. As most of her stated issues are exaggerated (yes, I do really think that most are), it is difficult to resolve them as they are actually hot air held

together with an ancient parental mistake and a good waft of paranoia!

I'm sorry to go on at such length, and I hope it makes sense. If you can help with any tips or pointers I'd be very grateful.

My thanks again and best regards

L.

.....

Hi L.,

For many years now, you have managed most aspects of Z\_\_'s life. But she is about to reach puberty, and as a result, she will be firing you as her manager any day now (and maybe already has).

Based on what I've read in your email, I think you may be trying too hard to save Z\_\_ from emotional discomfort. I would encourage you to ask yourself the question, "Am I taking on too much responsibility for Z\_\_'s feelings and behavior?" She may be milking your kindness for everything it's worth.

Attempting to "reason with" a strong-willed child is just another traditional parenting strategy that tends to make a bad problem worse.

Your assignment is quite easy to execute:

1. Respond to her appropriate behavior with acknowledgment and praise (i.e., accuse her of being successful, responsible, respectful, pretty, smart, etc.)

2. Respond to her inappropriate behavior with a poker face and a consequence

No lectures ...no heart-to-heart talks (unless initiated by her – but even then, don't "explain" yourself) ...no trying to "reason with" or rationalize ...no "defending" your position ...no repeated and redundant reassurance that she is loved ...no "feeling sorry" for ...no "feeling guilty" about ...etc. When parents do these things, they are in effect providing a lot on intensity and attention at the wrong time, which reinforces the child's desire for more of this kind of parent-child interaction.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:55AM (-07:00)

**\$50 for each A ?!**

**Thursday, August 28, 2008**

On the rewards idea for a middle school student: On the final report card: Is giving them \$50 for each A and \$25 for each B too much?



.....

Actually, I don't recommend paying kids for good grades at all. Once you start down this slippery slope, you have to keep raising the stakes. And once kids get old enough to earn their own money, you lose leverage. Not to mention that this kind of deal doesn't always work.

Child psychologist Sylvia Rimm points out that for high-achieving students, money doesn't matter. And, Rimm says, kids who are underachievers fail because they're inconsistent. So if they slip and get a poor grade, they figure that they're not going to get the reward and give up. Even worse, parents sometimes end up paying them for half measures and the system backfires.

In my experience, paying a compliment is better than paying cash. Reward good grades - or consistent effort -- by giving your kids a hug, a word of encouragement, or a spontaneous treat -- anything but money. That way kids learn the personal satisfaction that comes with a job well done. Sometimes money can be too powerful a motivator for parents to resist. But even then it seems to work best in small amounts and limited circumstances.

One dad I know came up with a set of financial incentives to reward his 11-year-old son for good study habits and improved grades even if the grades weren't As. But the boy was also motivated by a conscientious teacher and by his dad, who took an interest in his progress.

In every film about kids overcoming odds to reach a goal (think of *To Sir, With Love*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Hoosiers*, *Coach Carter*), the hero is either an inspirational teacher or a tough-as-nails coach who achieves success by holding the kids to a higher standard -- not by holding out a paycheck.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:14AM (-07:00)

## He'll have to move into our garage...

Friday, August 29, 2008

Mark,

My husband and I have been taking your online course and it has been very helpful.

Our son is about to turn 18 and has all but dropped out of school. We feel that our next step should be to give him a few choices: either he goes to school regularly or gets a job by the time he turns 18 (on October 5th) or he'll have to move into our garage. If he moves into the garage, we won't support him in any way except to provide food and a garage couch for him to sleep on. He won't be allowed in the house except to use the bathroom.

If we actually kick him out of the house now, I'm sure he'll just get into more trouble. I

know eventually it may come that, but the garage is my last step before kicking out.

Does this make good sense to you? Do you have any other recommendations?

Thanks so much for your input.

K.

.....

Hi K.,

Please don't get upset with me, but I think the garage idea is a poor one and borders on ridiculous. Keeping him in the garage is a classic example of employing "half-measures." If he knows he can only come in the house to use the bathroom, he will simply "need" to use the bathroom about 15 times per hour.

First of all, be sure to read the recommendation re: poor school performance in the section of the eBook entitled "Read these Emails from Exasperated Parents" [session #4 - online version].

Second, you cannot legally kick him out of the house now – so forget that one.

Third, you're right that you need to give him a few choices. They should go like this:

He can (1) attend school regularly, or (2) drop out of school and get a GED – **and** work full time, or (3) continue to do nothing (or very little).

Inanycase, the day after his 18th birthday, he will need to either (1) begin enrolling in a college or trade school, in which case he can continue to live at home (in the house – not the garage), or (2) find full time employment and live in his own apartment or elsewhere (there's no need for him to continue living in the "nest" if he's making his own money).

Now K\_\_ ...if you have a sick feeling in your gut right now, then you clearly have a lot of work to do yet in the "tough love" department.

You should prepare him - now - for his launch from the nest and into adulthood. Do you really want an adult child living in your garage for the next 10 to 15 years? I didn't think so.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:44AM (-07:00)

# Addicted to computer games...

Friday, August 29, 2008

Q: i am 27 yrs old mom of a 5 yrs-old boy who really, i may say addicted to computer games. Im worried about him coz he shows no interest in going to school. Aside from that at home he becomes destructive everytime we stop him from doing or getting what he wants. At the age of five he is lazy in writing and doing school work. But i believe that my child is smart and can be an outstanding student if only we could motivate him.

.....

A: Computers, video games, and the Internet have become entrenched features of our daily lives. Computer use has reached beyond work and is now a major source of fun and entertainment for many people. For most people, computer use and video game play is integrated into their lives in a balanced healthy manner. For others, time spent on the computer or video game is out of balance, and has displaced work, school, friends, and even family.

When time spent on the computer, playing video games or cruising the Internet reaches a point that it harms a youngster's or adult's family and social relationships, or disrupts school or work life, that person may be caught in a cycle of addiction. Like other addictions, the computer or video game has replaced friends and family as the source of a person's emotional life. Increasingly, to feel good, the addicted person spends more time playing video games or searching the Internet. Time away from the computer or game causes moodiness or withdrawal.

When a person spends up to ten hours a day or more rearranging or sending files, playing games, surfing the net, visiting chat rooms, instant messaging, and reading emails, that easily can reach up to seventy to eighty hours a week on-line with the computer. Major social, school or work disruptions will result.

Symptoms of computer or video game addiction:

For kids:

- Choosing to use the computer or play video games, rather than see friends.
- Dropping out of other social groups (clubs or sports).
- Falling asleep in school.
- Irritable when not playing a video game or on the computer.
- Lying about computer or video game use.
- Most of non-school hours are spent on the computer or playing video games.
- Not keeping up with assignments.
- Worsening grades.

For adults:

- Can't control computer or video game use.
- Computer or video game use is characterized by intense feelings of pleasure and guilt.
- Experience feelings of withdrawal, anger, or depression when not on the computer or involved with their video game.
- Fantasy life on-line replaces emotional life with partner.

- Hours playing video games or on the computer increasing, seriously disrupting family, social or even work life.
- Lying about computer or video game use.
- May incur large phone or credit bills for on-line services.
- Obsessing and pre-occupied about being on the computer, even when not connected.

There are even physical symptoms that may point to addiction:

- Back, neck aches
- Carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Dry eyes
- Failure to eat regularly or neglect personal hygiene
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances

For the computer or video game addicted person, a fantasy world on-line or in a game has replaced his or her real world. The virtual reality of the computer or game is more inviting than the every day world of family, school or work. With the increased access to pornography on the Internet and in games, this fantasy world may be highly sexual.

Kids love PC games, and that's not always a bad thing. Whether played on a handheld device, a computer, or a television set, the games can provide hours of quiet fun. (That's one reason parents often rely on them to keep the peace on family vacations.) The games can boost computer skills and improve eye-hand coordination. One 2004 study showed that surgeons who play PC games commit fewer surgical errors than do their non-game-playing counterparts.

PC games are emotionally "safe." When a youngster makes a mistake, no one else knows (unlike the public humiliation of, say, striking out in a real-life baseball game). And because each error made in a computer game helps the player learn the specific action needed to advance the next time, the player gets the satisfaction of steadily improving and ultimately winning.

But PC games carry some big downsides. Besides being very expensive, many popular games involve graphic sex and violence. Perhaps most worrisome, they can be extremely habit-forming. Any youngster can become "addicted" to PC games, but kids with AD/HD seem to be at particular risk. Many of them have poor social or athletic skills, and this doesn't matter in the world of PC games. Such games level the playing field for kids with AD/HD. And kids bothered by distractibility in the real world are capable of intense focus (hyperfocus) while playing. The computer game "trance" is often so deep that the only way to get the player's attention is to shake her or "get in her face."

To make the games less seductive, find ways to minimize your youngster's downtime at home, especially those times when he is alone. Maybe your youngster would be interested in arts and crafts, theater, or movie-making. Maybe a social-skills group would be a good idea. Maybe he could join a youth group at your church or synagogue.

If she has trouble with a particular sport because of poor motor skills, or has difficulty understanding the rules or strategies, look for another sport that might be more accommodating - for example, martial arts, bowling, or swimming. Help your youngster find some activity that he likes and a place where he can do it.

Kids with AD/HD often lack the "internal controls" needed to regulate how much time they

spend playing PC games. It's up to parents to rein in the use of the games.

The first step is often the hardest: Both parents must agree on a set of rules. How much time may be spent playing the games on school nights? Must homework be done first? Chores? How much time may be spent on a weekend day? Which games are taboo, and which are O.K.? If the youngster plays Internet-based games, which sites are acceptable?

Once parents agree, sit down with your youngster and discuss the rules. Make it clear which rules are negotiable and which are not. Then announce that the rules start right now. Be sure you can enforce the rules. For example, if your youngster is allowed to spend 30 minutes at PC games on school nights - and only after homework and chores are done - the game and game controls must be physically unavailable when she gets home from school.

If games involve a computer or a television set, find a way to secure the system until its use is permitted. When the 30 minutes of playing are up, retake the controls. If she balks, she loses the privilege to play the game the following day. If you come into her bedroom and find her playing the game under the covers, she might lose the privilege for several days.

Give warning times: "You have 15 more minutes... You now have 10 minutes... There are only five minutes left." A timer that is visible to the youngster can be helpful. When the buzzer rings, say, "I know you need to reach a point where you can save the game. If you need a few more minutes, I will wait here and let you have them."

If he continues to play despite your step-by-step warnings, do not shout or grab the game or disconnect the power. Calmly remind him of the rules, then announce that for each minute he continues to play, one minute will be subtracted from the time allowed the next day (or days). Once you get the game back, lock it up. When he finally regains the privilege to play, say, "Would you like to try again to follow the family rules?"

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:57AM (-07:00)

## Why do I feel so guilty ?

Saturday, August 30, 2008

Dear Mr. Hutten,

It's been awhile since my last e-mail.

My son M\_\_ is 17 1/2. He's quit 2 jobs over the last 6 months, but has a car. I've told him that he at least needs to have a job 1 weekend day . I think he should at least put gas in it himself. He is a senior this year and plays soccer now and hockey all winter until March. He has no interest in working at all and keeps asking for money. Per your advice I have stopped with the handouts. I've told him pay for gas or park the car- Why do I feel so guilty ?

I can't get him motivated to do anything, but I also know that he needs to motivate himself. He can be extremely charming until he hears no, that turns to the "whatever"

mentality. What else can I do ? Looking forward to your response,

M.

P.S.

I've intituted an 11:00 pm curfew and no more sleepovers-nothing good comes from teenage boys up all night !! I've stuck to both and probably couldn't have done this without you- you've helped me feel that I am doing the right thing instead of feeling guilty.(11:00 curfew is early, but is because of early summer incident- I've told him he can get back to 11:30 but it is up to him-

.....

Hi M.,

I don't have too much to add really. You're doing exactly what you should be doing ...and "feeling guilty" is very typical.

It does get better over time though. When you realize that you are doing all this FOR your son rather than AGAINST him, then you won't feel as though you've done something "wrong" or "bad" while implementing this "tough love" approach..

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:46AM (-07:00)

## Disneyland Dad: The Fly In The Ointment

Sunday, August 31, 2008

Hi Mark,

This weekend K is grounded. He asked his father to take him to soccer and his father did. (while his father lives with us I am in many respects a single mother and my husband is not interested in joint parenting). In fact my husband actively works against me.

Anyway, now K says he doesn't care if he is grounded - he will get his father to take him.

His father will buy him another phone if I confiscate it again.

The only option I see is to say that the grounding stands and he must start it again and until he serves his grounding I will not take him anywhere.

I would appreciate any thoughts you may have.

V.

.....

Hi V.,

*Re: The only option I see is to say that the grounding stands and he must start it again and until he serves his grounding I will not take him anywhere.*

You hit the nail right on the the head. When a child is grounded, but Disneyland Dad (i.e., the fly in the ointment) undermines the consequence, then mom simply restarts the clock when the child returns home.

For example, mom says her child is grounded for 3 days with no computer privileges. Disney Dad shows up and takes the kid to the carnival and buys him 3 lbs. of cotton candy, 2 stuffed toys, and one foot-long hot dog. Kid returns home (totally over-indulged and sick to his stomach) ...the clock starts again as soon as he walks in the door.

Be sure to let your son know that HE is the one extending the time-frame when he leaves with dad prematurely -- not you.

Also bear in mind the a weaker parenting plan supported by both parents is much better than a stronger one supported by only one parent.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen (and teen's father)  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:48AM (-07:00)

## I don't feel it is fair for us to pay that kind of money...

Wednesday, September 03, 2008

Hi Mark,

It is the 2nd week of school and my kid already has missing assignments and has a D- and an F in two of her classes. I am not saying anything about it. She is doing her chores and her attitude is okay. My problem is this....she has made the freshmen volleyball team. It will cost me \$250 for her to continue to play. I feel it is really important for her to play, it keeps her busy. She obviously is going to get kicked off of the team for her bad grades; she needs to maintain a 2.0 to play. I had told her previously (before I read your book) that if she doesn't play she could lose any or all privileges. I don't feel it is fair for us to pay that kind of money for her to play for a couple more weeks and for her not to have any consequences. Do you have any suggestions for me?

Thanks!

W.

.....

Hi W.,

A kid can earn privileges at home as well as school. Sports are school privileges that are

earned by maintaining a minimum grade point average. It looks like your daughter may soon be on the receiving end of a "natural consequence" for poor academic performance (i.e., getting kicked off the team).

Should you cough up \$250.00? Check with the coach first to see whether or not she is likely to be kicked off the team. If the coach says "yes" ...then that's pretty much the end of it. You shouldn't throw your money away in that event.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:46AM (-07:00)

## How to make my 13 yr old girl to sleep?

Wednesday, September 03, 2008

Hi Mark,

I have purchased your e-guide online parenting techniques and I have applied some of your methods. Though it is difficult to do at first without being angry and not reacting to my 13 yr old daughter rebellious act, but I must say she has improved slowly. Thanks for the guidance!

I would never thought of talking to her in a calmer way before. I was always angry at her when she didn't want to go to school and when she stays up way late at night sometime doesn't even have a wink and she decided to sleep during the day made me even furious. Every action she made, I responded with my anger and hence she branded me as the "Lady nagger of the house". I do deserve that name-calling, now that I realized my mistakes was not able to communicate effectively with her and not being able to express and explain things when I should have.

I'm a single mom. The care & control is given to my ex husband for both of my children. My daughter had a fall out with him and they had quite a big fight and as a result of that she ran away from her dad's place and lives with me since April this year. Although he strongly disapproved of her decision at first but he consent it verbally at the end citing that he will not want to have any part of her upbringing from then on and he told that in front of my daughter. It was sick of him not being able to be diplomatic at all in his choice of words or actions and for a child to hear that I can't even imagine... That was done and I know that it was terrible for my daughter to hear that first hands but I told her that he didn't mean to say that at all and every parent do love their children unconditionally no matter how big and bad the problem is. He was angry and he didn't know any better when he said that. That was my only explanation to her and I guess it didn't sit well on her. She has a low self-esteem due to what her father had said or treated her. Like calling her a prostitute when she sneaked away from home at night to meet her boyfriend then. She was blamed by her dad as the instigator for his Girlfriend to leave for her hometown...Just too much for a 13 yr old! I know it is hard for her and to be honest it was quite hard for me as well adjusting in the beginning. I was working then and I made a decision to quit my job.

She took medications more than she was prescribed by her Child Psychiatrist as she was



diagnosed having depressions and anxiety attacks. I've decided to switch the previous psychiatrist to the Hospital Child Psychiatrist specialist where she was treated for the over dose and she's no longer given any medications at all now. She still does have mood swings now and then and are unable to sleep at night. I have spoken to my daughter psychiatrist about this and he suggested to change her sleeping pattern by trying to go to bed earlier than her usual bed time. My daughter bedtime is actually at 10.30pm and he suggested that she should make an effort to be in bed by 10pm instead. I've tried making her to go to bed by 10 and even lie down with her to make her sleep and read books with her and she still can't sleep. I'm just wondering if you have any advice on how to make my 13 yr old girl to sleep? Anything would help!

With my best wishes and deep thanks,

S.

.....

Hi S.,

Anxiety (which is often brought on by a stressful event) is probably the most common cause of difficulty falling asleep. This is called "stress-related insomnia." It is a self-limited problem that usually resolves over several weeks (sometimes several months). It does not tend to turn into chronic insomnia. It might be helpful to reassure your daughter that it is normal to have difficulty falling asleep after a stressful life event, and that she can expect her situation to improve over the next several weeks.

Times like this are trying for parents. We don't want our children to experience pain, much less to help them embrace pain. But what an honor it is to be able to help our children face the truly difficult issues of life, and grow into mature, well-adjusted adults.

Your daughter can help herself in the following ways:

- Avoid caffeine intake which can increase feelings of anxiety and agitation
- Avoid illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Build a network of friends who help you cope in a positive way
- Decrease negative self-talk: challenge negative thoughts about yourself with alternative neutral or positive thoughts. "My life will never get better" can be transformed into "I may feel hopeless now, but my life will probably get better if I work at it and get some help"
- Develop assertiveness training skills. For example, state feelings in polite firm and not overly aggressive or passive ways: ("I feel angry when you yell at me"... "Please stop yelling.")
- Exercise and eat regularly
- Learn practical coping skills. For example, break a large task into smaller, more attainable tasks
- Learn relaxation exercises (abdominal breathing and muscle relaxation techniques)
- Learn to feel good about doing a competent or "good enough" job rather than demanding perfection from yourself and others
- Rehearse and practice situations which cause stress. One example is taking a speech class if talking in front of a class makes you anxious
- Take a break from stressful situations. Activities like listening to music, talking to a friend, drawing, writing, or spending time with a pet can reduce stress

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:00AM (-07:00)

## She is in juvenile detention...

Wednesday, September 03, 2008

Mark,

I subscribed to your ebook because we fit most of the descriptions of parents of out of control teens. I didn't even get to the bottom of the first session and our daughter has gotten much worse. As I write this she is in juvenile detention. She was arrested at our home last night after she scratched my husband's arms when he tried to get her from spraying peroxide around our bathroom. In the last week she has become more angry and has had threatening behavior brought on by a "no" answer from us for demanding behavior on her part.

Last night, she demanded in a rude manner that we go shopping at 8 o'clock last night for a new outfit for school today. When told that we weren't going at 8pm but we could go in the next couple of days, she began to slam things in her room. It sounded like furniture breaking. It deteriorated from there and 911 was called because I was scared of her behavior. I was looking for crisis intervention, not the cops. 911 didn't answer, so I hung up and tried to call her therapist. 911 tried to call back and the line was busy so the cops came to our house. When we relayed the story, they said that she would have to either be admitted to the hospital or be arrested and sent to juvenile detention. I don't know if you can help or if this falls within your parent-coaching offer. I don't know what to do next. I don't know what to do when she comes home. She is missing her first 2 days of school because of this.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

First of all, it is very common for things to get worse before they get better. A child who may have been over-indulged most of her life has great difficulty – initially – in adjusting to the parent's more assertive parenting approach.

Second, it's good that the police arrived at your doorstep after your daughter engaged in "battery" (scratching is indeed "battery" in the legal sense).

I think it was a blessing in disguise that the cops came out to your house. If you had your way about it, you would have talked to some crisis counselor over the phone – which would have been a total waste of everybody's time. You were about to employ a "half-measure" – but fortunately, this was not in the cards (so to speak).

So, in spite of yourself, you are on track. Your daughter will sit in detention for a few days, then she'll have a court date soon, then she'll come home – at which point you simply

continue to work the program as outlined.

She got a wonderful "life-lesson" (i.e., battery has legal consequences).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:14AM (-07:00)

## Today is the day he kicked in his bedroom door...

Thursday, September 04, 2008

Hi T. and T.,

**== > I've responded throughout your email below:**

Mark,

You seem to be the person with the most sound advice, so we are writing to you again. Our 16 year old has continued to escalate his out of control behavior. We have removed the privilege of having a private bedroom, as recommended, and we have a space for him on a couch. We locked up his room, and we removed all of his attitude clothing and gadgets. He basically has an alarm clock, his school clothes, food, water, and normal household items. There is a posted note on his door telling him simply (and precisely) what he needs to do to get this stuff back. He needs to comply to a three day grounding and avoid swearing and profanity towards his parents. Pretty straight forward, and we even took the time to read it with our best poker faces.

**== > O.K. So far ...so good.**

He has kicked in the door to his room to get some stuff (we didn't have most of his items there), he leaves and comes back after curfew (if at all), he attends school sporadically (he claims to like it), and he is constantly telling his mother to shut up or leave him alone (with profanity) whenever she tries to approach him about anything. We are filing reports (almost daily) with the police and with the juvenile court diversion program (he's currently in) for every rule/law he violates. We also filed a fourth degree misdemeanor domestic violence for pushing his mother around. We even have taken complaints straight to the juvenile court intake officer.

**== > You are still greatly on track. I'm proud of you for doing the hard business of employing tough love (which is often tougher on the parent than the child).**

They still have the same story - he's not doing anything bad enough. They told us straight out that his most likely outcome is a probation officer that will put him at the bottom of the list of priorities as he hasn't done anything really bad. We keep doing it anyway.

**== > Re: *They still have the same story - he's not doing anything bad enough.***

I would disagree. "Battery" is certainly "bad enough." Your filed complaint will have its day in court, which may also be the day that your son is placed on probation.

Perhaps no single incident is "bad enough" (other than the battery). However, as you are documenting the events and filing reports, a cumulative effect is taking place under probation's nose (e.g., one bee sting is meaningless, but 25 bee stings are deadly). Probation will stall as long as they can (since they are super busy and do not want to take on any more cases than necessary). But eventually they will see the need to intervene.

**Pick the battles carefully. Here are the battles you should fight:**

- **Whenever your son commits any act that is a crime for a juvenile (i.e., status offenses such as truancy, possession and consumption of alcohol, curfew violations, purchase of cigarettes, etc.**
- **Whenever he commits any act that would be a crime for an adult**

**Other than the above 2 points, let it go and focus on making plans for him to move out when he's 18.**

He is not following his counseling anymore, and we're running out of options.

== > Counseling is just another traditional parenting strategy that tends to make a bad problem worse (because the kid feels that the parents are blaming him for all the family's problems, thus he becomes resentful and behaves accordingly).

T\_\_ sat down today and told him that we still are his family, and that all he needs to do is follow family rules. Today is the day he kicked in his bedroom door while we were gone. Our other family member and friend placement options look grim as no one really wants to deal with him. He has disassociated himself with his grandparents and other family members as he believes we turned them against him.

== > **If there was property damage, then call the cops again (if you haven't done so already) so they can file yet another report.**

**I have a feeling that things may come to a head when the battery charge is addressed. If, for whatever reason, probation does not want to address that issue, then it's time to get an attorney and have him talk to the prosecutor. Then you'll have the cards stacked in your favor.**

Mark

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:10AM (-07:00)

**I cannot find any instructional video...**

**Saturday, September 06, 2008**

G'day I just joined/purchased and have commenced reading through. I find that each page says "Instructional video #1" etc, but I cannot find any instructional video. Would you please let me know what I need to do to change in my settings.

Ta,  
P.

.....

Hi P.,

You had me worried there for a minute. I checked ...and the videos are still there. Does your computer run slow perhaps?

Mark

.....

G'day Mark, I have attached screen shots of the first page and the introduction page. As you will see there is a big gap in the beginning of the introduction page that I am assuming is where the video is - this is the same for all the other pages as well. Any suggestions? Cheers, P. :o)

.....

Hi P.,

If you have a slow computer, the videos may take awhile to load. Here are some suggestions that may speed things up a bit:

1. First, try rebooting your computer (i.e., turn it off, then back on) before viewing the videos.

2. Use Mozilla Firefox 3 as your main web browser. It is much faster than Internet Explorer. Click here for a free download ==> <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/>

3. Close all other browser windows other than the page with the video you want to view.

4. Free up disk space. By freeing disk space, you can improve the performance of your computer. The Disk Cleanup tool on your computer helps you free up space on your hard disk. The utility identifies files that you can safely delete, and then enables you to choose whether you want to delete some or all of the identified files. Use Disk Cleanup to:

•

Remove temporary Internet files.

•

Remove downloaded program files (such as Microsoft ActiveX controls and Java applets).

•

Empty the Recycle Bin.

•

Remove Windows temporary files.

•

Remove optional Windows components that you don't use.

- 

Remove installed programs that you no longer use.

5. Your computer will also load many programs at startup you probably do not need. You can run the Microsoft Configuration utility to prevent these programs from loading into memory. To do so, go to Start>Run and type msconfig and hit OK. Under the Startup tab, uncheck any programs you know do not need to load.

6. The most common performance hit comes from viruses and spyware. Make sure you are running an antivirus program like AVG and a spyware program such as Spybot Search and Destroy.

7. You can click on the Google button (lower right corner of each video), which will take you to **Video.Google.com**. The videos should run a bit faster when viewed directly from Google.

8. Once the above steps are taken, be sure your computer is in an open space where the fans are clean and working. Heat buildup in a PC will slow the processor and may even cause it to lockup or shutdown.

9. If none of the above works, then you can simply click on the play button, then go feed the cat. By the time you return to the computer, the video should be loaded and ready to view.

I hope this helps,

Mark

.....

G'day Mark, Thank you so much for the info. My husband has the same computer as me, so I tried it on his and his worked fine. So, I got onto MS website and read up on their help files and did some downloads as a result. After this was done I got your e-mail, so I also cleaned out my recycle bin - I keep forgetting about that bit and had over 4GB to get rid of!! The videos on your pages are now coming up with no problems. Thank you again. I have already seen an improvement in my ODD/ADHD/Asperger's son after only reading a little bit of your information. My 'normal' daughter who has obviously been feeling neglected will be the type to get worse before better, but at least I now feel as if I can start living again :o) Cheers, P.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:24AM (-07:00)

# If I encourage him I am damned and if I don't am damned...

Saturday, September 06, 2008

Hi Mark

Thanks for the help and advice you gave me. I did go to the police after my son took that car when I was on holidays. The police would not lay charges because the kid had gone out for 5 mins. and the neighbour called him on the cell phone and told him to get the car right back now! The police told me because they did not have to look for the car they weren't going to do anything. I asked them to come and talk to him then, and they told me that scare tactics like that really don't work with kids any more. The system here sucks. My son is on drugs and he did come home higher then a kite and abusive to me, the one night he didn't come home at all and was at the mall at 2:00 a.m. in the morning and I called him and said that he was to get home and he said that he was not. He came home that morning and slept for 26 hours. The next night I told him that things were going to change etc. like the program talks about, that night he went out I told him to be back at curfew or I would be calling the police as he would be a runaway. He came home stoned, abusive but home before curfew. I took his things away, t.v., cell phone, computer and he was very abusive to me calling me everything in the book, I used the technique I am not going to argue etc. He phoned his friends mom then and asked her if she still had that room for him at her place and she said sure I will send my kid over to get you and your stuff right away and off he went.

He stayed at this home and 2 weeks ago at 3:30 a.m there is this banging and the doorbell ringing non stop we jumped out of bed and there was Chris at the door. Crying and telling us that he was in so much trouble he had taken 4 grams of mushrooms and he was scared that he was having trouble breathing. We called the Crisis Centre and they got a bed ready for him at the detox centre to monitor him and get him counselling for his drug problem. He started smoking up in March of this year and it was downhill from there. When we were on the phone with the Crisis Centre to get Chris help which he asked for the daughter of this mother that he was staying at called she was higher then a kite asking for her brother Andrew and she called twice until I told my husband that it must be the daughter at this house. I \*69 on the phone to get the number and sure enough she got high with Chris that night and she was scared to. Chris stayed at the detox for 2 day and he told us when we went to visit that he was scared there and we prayed with him and we told him that this was the best placed for him to get better. The 2nd night after we left he called this mother to come and get him and she did. It is a voluntary programs here and the kid can sign themselves out and the parent has no rights. I called the 3rd day in the morning to see how he was and they told me he was gone. I phoned the mother and she said that he was scared there and that she was going to take him to NA meetings and go with him. That she loves him and wants to adopt him.

When I had gone over the day he was admitted to the detox to get some clothes at first she would not give me anything then she said she would only give me a few things 2 tshirts and a pair of underwear and that was all. She didn't even ask me how he was, just that I was not to say anything negative about him and that anything I said she was going right back and telling him and that she loves him and wants to adopt him, when I said we needed to get him help. When I called her that morning I found out that she picked him up and I told her she needed to wake up and that her own kids were on drugs and that I

was on the phone with her on kid from 4:00 a.m .until 8:00 a.m. making sure she was okay.

Our family doctor got us an addiction counsellor and we have been going as a family. There is alcoholism on both sides of the family and it goes a couple of generations back. I do not drink and my husband has a beer now and then and that it is. Our family lives were a living hell.

Chris decided that he wanted to get his own townhouse with 2 friends (they do not do drugs) and a few days before he went on this 2 day binge and came to our door he had asked me to be the guarantee on this townhouse. I refused and I knew that something was going to happen. My dog was even sitting at the front door like something was about to happen. This mother signed for the townhouse for him. The morning I phoned her, I asked her why she took him out and she said he wanted to come home and I said what do you think you are doing that we are not doing, she said she is there for him. Well where was she at 3:30 in the morning when he was scared and need our help. What I can't get over is that Chris didn't like her kids and the older one was always bullying him at church youth group and my friends son went along to protect him.

Chris has moved into the townhouse now, he has told my husband that I never talk to him. When I see him, I just say Hi and wave and keep going. He has told me that when I talk to him like tonight for example we phoned to say hi and how are things going, I asked him if the things that counsellor was teaching him to do was working and he said that it is hard to stop. I said maybe he needs to hang with the kids that are not into this life style and that to keep busy maybe take a course to keep busy and that he has potential and he got mad at me and said we were having a nice conversation and now I was lecturing again and that when I do this it only makes him want to go out and get stoned again. He told me tonight doesn't want me to say he has potential or anything like that and I am not to talk about his friends. I did not cut up his friends, I am afraid to talk to him because he lays this guilt trip on me and I am afraid it will set him off on a binge. The other week he told me that I don't talk to him and it was like I had given up on him. If I encourage him I am damned and if I don't am damned. After counselling last week, he gave me a hug and said that he knows that it was the drugs that had come between us.

Do you have any words of advice on this?

Thanks, A.

.....

Keep your end of the conversation very short and simple. Tell him you love him ...miss him ...and hope he is doing well. That's about it. If your side of the conversation goes more than 30 seconds – then you've gone too long. Less is better at this point. You'll know when your son wants more words from you, but until then, keep it short and sweet.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:32AM (-07:00)



## There is no coming back...

Saturday, September 06, 2008

Hi Mark,

Thank you very much for taking time and reading my story. The question that I have is if you think we did the right thing by telling her that if she made a choice to leave home then she has to live with that and there is no coming back at least for now. It feels right to me but I am getting hammered by my parents who scream and yell that it is all too harsh and I am a bad mother.

==> The first part is O.K. But I would let her know that your door is always open – as long as she is willing to abide by your house rules.

The other thing we told her that if she chose to use her biological father as a leverage to get all things her way, we wish her luck and we are not supporting her financially at all, that she is on her own.

==> This is on track!

The third question is what is your opinion based on your experience and what you read about our daughter on chances that she will change. The worst fear I have now that she is grown into person with very low moral principals, who can lie, betray and do other terrible things just to get what she wants.

==> I believe she will change very little UNTIL she becomes a mother herself. Then you are likely to see a different person.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:59AM (-07:00)

## Do we increase the consequence...

Tuesday, September 09, 2008

Hi Mark,

I have a question on consequences. Scenerio:

Older daughter (S\_\_) with drivers permit is going to drive our family home from dinner. Younger child (B\_\_ - 13) runs and jumps into the front seat refusing to allow her sister to drive home. If we handled it correctly here's our question.

First we would say, please get into the back seat (to B\_\_). If she then does not and keeps yelling or refusing then we say, "If you don't get into the backseat then you will be choosing a consequence of not using your computer for one day." Then still refusing we say, "Your consequence does not begin until you sit quietly in the backseat."

Still refusing.....This is our question. Here we have said that her consequence doesn't

begin until she gets in the backseat, but she hasn't budged. So, do we increase the consequence (length or taking away more things, i.e. changing the consequence) or do we continue to sit in the parking lot while she is screaming and wait?

Thank You,

Dr. M. & M.C.

.....

First, please review the section of the eBook entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [online version of the eBook].

Second, don't say "please." "I need you to \_\_\_\_" would be better. "Please" denotes that you may be up for compromise, which you're not.

Third, rather than saying, "If you don't \_\_\_\_" -- say, "If you choose not to \_\_\_\_". This implies that your daughter is doing the choosing -- not you.

*Re: So, do we increase the consequence (length or taking away more things, i.e. changing the consequence) or do we continue to sit in the parking lot while she is screaming and wait?*

No and no. Could you have had her sit in the back seat? Then whenever she stops screaming (as the family makes their way home), the one-day grounding with no computer privileges begins.

Mark  
My Out-of-Control Teen

.....

Thanks for your answer. But, what did you mean by could we have had her sit in the back seat? That was our problem. We needed her to go into the back seat and she wasn't moving.

Thanks,  
M & M

.....

Would it have been possible to physically move her? If she was going to physically restrain your other daughter from driving, then the police would have been a big help to PUT her in the back seat.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:51AM (-07:00)

## I was looking for an Internet Support Group for parents with “out-o...

Tuesday, September 09, 2008

Mark,

I found you online. I was looking for an Internet Support Group for parents with “out-of-control” teenagers. I am looking because of friends of mine. They are divorced, both good friends of mine. The mother was the hands-on parent till 6 months ago, when she basically “called it a day” on the ongoing abuse she was suffering at the hands of both her teenage daughters. Then the father got the chance to have a go at it, and he is now suffering a similar fate.

I am a former psychologist myself, also divorced. My kids are now adults. I have had some tough times, especially with my youngest daughter when she was in her late teens. I count my blessings that one way or another “we” came through. The relationship now between my kids, my ex and I, is really good, and a source of happiness.

I have had the privilege of witnessing from close by and being involved in the raising of quite a few kids over the years, and kids going through their teenage years. However, what the friends I am speaking about, are dealing with is, quite honestly, something I have never seen before. Of course there are reasons. However, these teenage girls are not deprived kids, and yet they make it seem that way. My reading, (as an observer if you will) is, that they are 100% in control. Their abuse and lack of respect is on-going, pretty much 24 hrs a day, expressing itself in small ways, as well as bigger ways (“I will kill you”).

I am now recommending my friend to get in touch with you, and write off to your program.

Thank you!

Frank

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:01PM (-07:00)

## That is my experience...

Tuesday, September 09, 2008

Hi Mark,

I am a single Dad looking after 2 difficult teenagers. Bought your e-book today because I was astonished by the presentation. Yes.....that is my experience!!!! Thank you...I am on session one and trying out my poker face tonight with the girls!! It seems to be working.....Loved this...if you are having problems with the kids ...You have to grow!!

Thank you for hope

J.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:46PM (-07:00)

## Online Parent Support

Tuesday, September 09, 2008

Hi Mark! I think your techniques are really great & thank you for putting your skills out there for so many families in need! I wish I had your information 10 years ago.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:48PM (-07:00)

## My husband and I were at the end of our ropes...

Thursday, September 11, 2008

Thank you for your concern for others. My husband and I were at the end of our ropes. I prayed for wisdom and God certainly answered my prayer. I have already tried some things on the first week actually the day I ordered this and to my amazement - they worked!! I had already been thinking the turmoil was like a drug for my daughter and I was right. Thank you so much and God Bless you! – E.H.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:58AM (-07:00)

## Re: Sibling Rivalry

Saturday, September 13, 2008

Mark,

Our 16-year-old daughter constantly tells her younger siblings what to do and how to do it and that the way they do things isn't good enough. It creates daily friction in the family. What can we do to make it stop? And do I understand you to say that parents shouldn't pay a lot of attention to children when they are fighting?

.....

Hi T.,

Re: And do I understand you to say that parents shouldn't pay a lot of attention to children when they are fighting?

That's right. Too much attention handicaps a child's ability to fully grow up. In this regard, there is general agreement among parenting pundits that adolescence now begins at 10 and lasts almost 20 years. In the second place, children don't really like a lot of attention. They like to be ignored, to be left alone. But a child has no way of knowing that if he's

never experienced the joys of being ignored.

I'm describing a ubiquitous state of parental micromanagement, and when parents micromanage, children whine. The general theme of this whining is that everything is "too hard" and life isn't fair. One of the most predictable themes of all this complaining has to do with being treated unfairly by siblings, which brings me back to your question.

I'll just bet that when your younger kids complain about their older sister, you make the mistake of trying to solve the problem. Your involvement whips their conflict into a soap opera, replete with yelling and tears and general gnashing of braces. You need to deal with this with a sense of humor. Instead of helping to whip this into an intergenerational drama, turn it into your very own family sitcom. The next time the younger kids come to you with tales of woe concerning older sis, just say, "I love you, too!" and walk away, singing the first verse and chorus from "The Hills Are Alive With The Sound Of Music." After they recover from their disorientation, they will catch up to you, complaining ever more loudly. Turn around and say, "Life is good!" (Sing the opening lines from "When The Saints Go Marching In").

It's important that you look like a permanent resident of La-La Land. Just keep doing this until they give up, which they will --- eventually. Other equally irrelevant things you can say include "I hope the Cubs win the World Series" and "I just love those raspberry-filled Hostess Ho Ho's -- don't you?"

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:35AM (-07:00)

## Drug usage...

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Hi L.,

== > I've responded throughout your email below:

My husband and I are very happy with your services. We really need some advice for a situation.

Our 16- year-old son A\_\_\_ this past spring got into some drug usage-Marijuana, RX drugs, etc. We were floored. We have a close and caring family. I'm sure you've heard this before.

It went on for 6-7 months off and on, consequences were given and communication greatly increased, but he would eventually take his earned back freedom to fall back.

Fortunately, we have caught him quickly after each fall-back.

Lying is off the charts- in our face, doe-eyes, innocent, assuring lies.

We're getting much more intuitive and smart about it.

Last night we allowed him to have a friend over. He brought a bong in a backpack. Suspicious behavior led us to discover that he had the bong. We questioned our son privately. He insisted (doe-eyed and sincerely) that he knew nothing about it. We went around and around. No, he said, he was telling the truth! He knew nothing about it! My husband caringly asked the kid about it, and he admitted in front of Aaron that yes, our son knew about it and they were planning on arranging to try to get drugs to our house to probably smoke outside.

Every time we give him an inch, he proves deviant in his behavior, and somehow he breaks the rules we lay out for him. Yet he really tries hard to change during the in between times. He stays sincere for a time, and really tries hard to be honest and work hard.

Last week we let him go to a movie with a friend. We told him to stay in the movie theatre or outside on the sidewalk the whole time until we picked him up.

When we dropped him off, my husband felt something was up. Turns out we stealthily watched him from our car and tracked him. At one point we lost him, and it was at that point he had skipped down to the Taco Cabana with his friends. I called him during this mystery period, and he assured me he was in the bathroom at the theatre.

He was at Taco Cabana. So sure enough, we watched him come back up from T.C. and confronted him. He had to leave with us. He cried, showed remorse, etc. We grounded him for this weekend, but he earned it back thru chores. But alas, this weekend (the previous story).

So we're exhausted.

He was extensively psych tested very recently. Obviously ADHD is high on the list. But everything else showed he was pretty mentally healthy.

One of my questions is based on an observation the psychologist made. He said, and I totally agree with him, that Aaron has an extremely narrow focus, and that he doesn't see the warning signs or take in enough information to make decisions. I'm sure this is true of many teens, but for heaven's sake.

== > My take on this is that your son is a "high risk-taker" (which is not altogether bad depending on how he uses this skill). We stay focused on strengths in this program. You will do well to shift to that paradigm as well.

We've taken him to the insurance agent who talked to him for an hour about how if he was caught with drugs he would not be able to get insurance and would not be able to drive. We've told him that in order for him to be able to drive, he would have to stay away from drugs, druggies, and extreme behavior- which we have thoroughly and prolifically described to him.

== > I'm sure the "lecture" was a form of pouring on a lot of intensity while "things were going wrong." Your son got a payoff – but not the kind you hoped for.

We've taken him to the Juvenile Detention Center to show him what happens to kids who have to go there. He got to see the little jumpsuit and the video.

== > More intensity while things are going wrong. He now will have a fascination with being detained. We, as parents, want to provide intensity when things are going right (or not going wrong) rather than using all these "traditional" parenting strategies you've listed so far.

We've visited his vice principal and informed her of A\_\_\_'s struggle, and now she checks in with him. He knows he will be subject to more than the average locker tests.

== > This is a good move!

We've been very honest about our feelings and forthright about admitting the times we've made mistakes as well, to bring healing to wounds from the past. We are very available, we're setting limits, giving consequences, praising him for good behavior, giving him space, pulling him into dinnertime conversations, etc.....

We are random drug testing. He likes the church we attend, and really likes the pastor's relevant teachings, but doesn't want to get involved with the youth group. Insecure.

Did I mention he also got arrested for stealing in December. It was expunged from his record, but not without him paying us back for some financial consequences, having his "goods" removed for a while (restriction), community service, and a whole ton of communication about the deal and everything involved with his choices.

So, do we need to deal with the drug behavior more severely than the 3-day restriction?

== > No. And the reason is because he will receive a series of natural consequences by default (and already has). Also, be sure to read the section of the online version of the eBook entitled "Read These Emails From Exasperated Parents" [session #4]. Look for where it reads: "We got a call from school last week. Our son got busted with a bag of pot in his locker and has been suspended from school for the rest of the year. My wife and I are shocked and angry as hell. I'm not sure what question to ask at this point other than what should we do now?"

If he gets caught with drugs, he gets arrested, has very long-term driving consequences because of the insurance deal, and it will always be something he has to mention when applying for college or a job, etc.

== > These are the natural consequences I'm talking about. Do not attempt to save him from making poor choices that will lead to the above.

Second, how can we work with him to expand his thinking to remember what's really important to him so he will weigh more carefully his choices.

== > You can't. Stop trying to "reason with" him. Strong-willed kids only learn from one method – the school of hard knocks.

Lastly, he has a very hard time connecting to friends. He's friend-LY and quite handsome and even a little charismatic. But somehow he can't seem to hook any more deeply than surface. He was very hurt when a close friendship fell apart a few years ago (the kids was great but had some issues that made it very difficult to connect. He would wall up a lot). I think this has something to do with it. But even then, he seems so insecure that friendships have always been a struggle. He was bullied through junior high

(kept it a secret from us) and carries around some damaged thinking. I believe that a great deal of his acting out with drugs has been to salve his pain and connect to people who seemed more than willing to share their drugs with him.

== > Be sure to read the web page on bullying (click on the "website" button at the top of the Contents page [online version] and look under "Parent's Strategies A-Z" [right side of page]).

So much is at stake.

== > You're feeling sorry for him at some level – and I can promise that will work against you and your efforts.

He has a good heart, and I'm stunned by all of this. Maybe I need some comfort. It doesn't seem to be getting very much better.

Any and all advice you can think of will be more appreciated than you can possibly imagine.

Thank you for what you do.

Blessings,

L.

== > I think you are largely on track (with just a few exceptions that I have eluded to in my comments).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:18AM (-07:00)

## School Refusal vs. Truancy

Sunday, September 14, 2008

My daughter has mental health issues and not only does the school staff want to send her home. She will be so depressed and will not get out of her bed. I have had several consequences for her these are not doing any good. What would you suggest?

Thank you,

L.

.....

Hi L.,

First, let's make a distinction between truancy and school refusal-

School refusal:



- The kid is unreasonably scared of going to school.
- The kid might pretend to be sick or say he or she doesn't want to go to school.
- The kid usually wants to stay home because he or she feels safe there.

Truancy:

- The kid chooses not to go to school.
- The kid skips school and doesn't tell his or her parents.
- The kid may have antisocial behaviors such as delinquency, lying, and stealing.

Kids with school refusal are scared to go to school. They may be so scared that they won't leave the house. School refusal is most common in 5- and 6-year-olds and in 10- and 11-year-olds, but it can start at any age.

The problem might start after a kid has been home for a while, such as after a holiday, summer vacation, or brief illness. It also might happen after a stressful event, such as moving to a new house or the death of a pet or relative.

Kids who won't go to school often say they feel sick. They might wake up and say they have a headache, stomachache, or sore throat. If they stay home from school, the "illness" might go away, but it comes back the next morning before school. Some kids may have crying spells or temper tantrums.

Kids with school refusal may worry about the safety of their parents or themselves. They may not want to be in a room by themselves, and they may be scared of the dark. They also may have trouble falling asleep by themselves and might have nightmares. Kids who are truant (or "playing hooky") are not scared to go to school the way kids with school refusal are.

Take your kid to the doctor. Anxiety or a physical illness might be causing the problem. You also should talk to your kid's teacher or school counselor. Your kid's doctor will be able to rule out any illness that may be causing the problem.

Unreasonable fears about leaving home can be treated. Parents must keep trying to get their kid to go back to school. Your kid's doctor may want your kid to talk to a psychologist, social worker, or kid psychiatrist. The doctor also might prescribe medicine to help with your kid's anxiety.

The longer your kid stays out of school, the harder it will be to return. The goal of treatment is to help your kid learn ways to reduce anxiety and return to school. Kids who do not go to school for long periods may develop serious learning setbacks or social problems. Kids who do not get professional help might have emotional problems such as anxiety when they get older. Early treatment of this problem is important for your kid's well-being.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:07AM (-07:00)

# What direction do I go in?

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Hi Mark

We went for counselling tonight and it was a mess.

The counsellor asked how we were doing and C\_\_\_ said he was fine. Then he asked me why I was so quiet. I said that C\_\_\_ doesn't really want me to really talk. The counsellor said that there was a wall up between us. I said that I was upset that he stole the car and that there was a trust issue. That was what set off C\_\_\_. He said that I brought up to him on the phone the other night when I asked him how he was doing with his issue with drugs and was what the counsellor was helping with working for him. He said that it was very hard and I said maybe he should be around the kids that do not use and that would make it easier and he got mad. Tonight he told the counsellor that that made him upset, that I make him upset and the counsellor told him that nobody can make you upset if you don't let them that is your feelings. He used the example of the alcoholic that drinks and says to his wife I drink because you bug me about drinking. Then he got mad at the counsellor and said he didn't want to be here. (He had been calling for a week asking when that appointment was.) C\_\_\_ asked my husband a question about why he had to leave our house and my husband was trying to explain and C\_\_\_ cut him off. The counsellor said to C\_\_\_ you asked your Dad a question but you don't want to hear the answer you cut him off. C\_\_\_ said that is the way I talks that he asks a question that is how he is. I explained or tried to explain that every action has a reaction and that his behaviour is something I could not tolerate in our home. He told the counsellor that when I see him that he is myr son and she doesn't even give him a hug. C\_\_\_ started to cry and asked my husband to drive him home. All the way home C\_\_\_ cried. He told my husband that I keep bringing up all the stuff that went on in the last few months. He said that he didn't want to talk to us and not to call or anything. He said that when he was living here that I was always on his case, I was getting calls from the school that he wasn't showing up for class, he was hanging out at a friends place all day, he wouldn't go to tutoring and I would have to pay for the missed session. I basically was to keep my mouth shut and let him do what he wanted to do that he was running the show. He wasn't going to his co-op job placement for school, no homework was being done, he was lipping off to me. He also brought up that I went and talked to his friends parents about what was going on, ie. that their kids were in my house when I was on vacation, that is break and enter, and that they were in the car and if the police had to do a check on the vehicle and find it, those kids would have been charged and had a criminal record, but the police would not lay charges because the car came right back.

I stayed for the rest of the counselling session the counsellor said that I am looking at C\_\_\_ and seeing the same things I saw in my dad. My dad was a violent alcoholic and I have to get past this and see C\_\_\_ as C\_\_\_.

When I left the session, I went over to C\_\_\_'s and he was still crying. He told me that he was upset that I didn't come over to the house that he was staying at and ask him to come home. He doesn't like living in the townhouse with these other kids. He didn't like living at his friend's home with the mother that got him out of detox and the same mother that signed the lease for the townhouse. Now he says that he is stuck there for a year until the lease is up. I was suppose to coming running after him and after he did all these bad things to us and ask him to come home. He also said he was upset that I had taken

all of his things away, cell phone, computer etc. just before he left, hey I was following the program. It seems that every time a counsellor disagrees with him and points something out he get mad and quits. The counsellor said that he wants my love not my criticism. I think C\_\_\_ has a problem with authority.

One day last month I went to the coffee shop and came out and my car had a big scratch on it. That night C\_\_\_ came over to the house to say hi and then out of the blue said, you have to admit Mom that when ever I used your car I always took good care of it, did I, did I. Wow, I wondered if he know or if he scratched the car. Later that week, I came home and there was this tshirt with a big knot in the middle of it I thought this is weird, I opened the tshirt up and there was pieces of glass tied up in this tshirt. My neighbour said that she just saw a car with teenagers back out of my drive way but didn't see who was in it. This all happened before C\_\_\_ went on a bender and showed up at our door in the middle of the night crying to get him help.

Since I emailed you, I have been using the 30 second rule saying hi, love you etc. and quickly leaving. I dropped a few things off apples, melon, carrots and he said to me on Saturday, thank you so much, I appreciate it and it was nice seeing you, what time is counselling.

Now today after the session what direction do I go in?

Any insight in to this kid from what you have seen?

A.

.....

A.,

"Counseling" is just another traditional parenting strategy that tends to make a bad problem worse (and you're hearing this from a counselor).

I would say that YOU received a natural consequence for making the choice to involve your son in counseling.

Counseling does not work for a strong-willed teen because he thinks that the parent is blaming HIM for all the family's problems (e.g., "My mom thinks there is something 'wrong' with me ...she's trying to 'fix' me...").

Re: Now today after the session what direction do I go in?

First, I'd question whether or not I was wasting money on counseling. If you son feels like he needs "talk therapy", I'm sure he'll tell you so.

Second, continue doing what you've been doing with one important caveat: Every time you see your son, make it a habit to say things that boost his confidence (e.g., "You're more than capable of making it on your own ...you've got what it takes to be a productive adult in society ...I've got confidence in you ...I love you son..."). Find a thousand different ways to say the above over the next several months - and even years. Eventually he will come to believe your words of encouragement.

Third, don't fall for the guilt trips. As soon as you begin to "feel sorry" for your son, you run the risk of returning to over-indulgent parenting (and I don't think you're one to move backward rather than forward).

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:09AM (-07:00)

## Hangin' with the wrong crowd...

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Mark,

Just joined today. Your program is very perceptive. Unfortunately, my wife and I see ourselves in these descriptions of over indulgence. Current problem is with our 16 year old son hanging with the wrong crowd. Suggestions on how to break him out? Thanks for any help.

B.

.....

Hi B.,

Everyone needs to belong — to feel connected with others and be with others who share attitudes, interests, and circumstances that resemble their own. People choose friends who accept and like them and see them in a favorable light.

Teenagers want to be with people their own age — their peers. During adolescence, teenagers spend more time with their peers and without parental supervision. With peers, teenagers can be both connected and independent, as they break away from their moms and dads' images of them and develop identities of their own.

While many families help teenagers in feeling proud and confident of their unique traits, backgrounds, and abilities, peers are often more accepting of the feelings, thoughts, and actions associated with the teen's search for self-identity.

The influence of peers — whether positive or negative — is of critical importance in your son's life. Whether you like it or not, the opinions of your son's peers often carry more weight than yours.

The ability to develop healthy friendships and peer relationships depends on a teen's self-identity, self-esteem, and self-reliance.

At its best, peer pressure can mobilize your son's energy, motivate for success, and encourage your son to conform to healthy behavior. Peers can and do act as positive role models. Peers can and do demonstrate appropriate social behaviors. Peers often listen to, accept, and understand the frustrations, challenges, and concerns associated with being a teenager.

The need for acceptance, approval, and belonging is vital during the teen years. Teenagers who feel isolated or rejected by their peers — or in their family — are more likely to engage in risky behaviors in order to fit in with a group. In such situations, peer pressure can impair good judgment and fuel risk-taking behavior, drawing a teen away from the family and positive influences and luring into dangerous activities.

For example, teenagers with ADHD, learning differences or disabilities are often rejected due to their age-inappropriate behavior, and thus are more likely to associate with other rejected and/or delinquent peers. Some experts believe that teenage girls frequently enter into sexual relationships when what they are seeking is acceptance, approval, and love.

A powerful negative peer influence can motivate a teen to make choices and engage in behavior that his or her values might otherwise reject. Some teenagers will risk being grounded, losing their moms and dads' trust, or even facing jail time, just to try and fit in or feel like they have a group of friends they can identify with and who accept them. Sometimes, teenagers will change the way they dress, their friends, give up their values or create new ones, depending on the people they hang around with.

Some teenagers harbor secret lives governed by the influence of their peers. Some — including those who appear to be well-behaved, high-achieving teenagers when they are with adults — engage in negative, even dangerous behavior when with their peers.

Once influenced, teenagers may continue the slide into problems with the law, substance abuse, school problems, authority defiance, gang involvement, etc.

If your son associates with people who are using drugs or displaying self-destructive behaviors, then he is probably doing the same.

It is important to encourage friendships among teenagers. We all want our children to be with persons who will have a positive influence, and stay away from persons who will encourage or engage in harmful, destructive, immoral, or illegal activities.

Moms and dads can support positive peer relationships by giving their teenagers their love, time, boundaries, and encouragement to think for themselves.

Specifically, moms and dads can show support by:

- Being genuinely interested in your son's activities. This allows moms and dads to know their teen's friends and to monitor behavior, which is crucial in keeping teenagers out of trouble. When misbehavior does occur, moms and dads who have involved their children in setting family rules and consequences can expect less flack from their children as they calmly enforce the rules. Moms and dads who, together with their children, set firm boundaries and high expectations may find that their children's abilities to live up to those expectations grow.
- Encouraging independent thought and expression. In this way, teenagers can develop a healthy sense of self and an enhanced ability to resist peer pressure.
- Having a positive relationship with your son. When parent-teen interactions are characterized by warmth, kindness, consistency, respect, and love, the relationship will flourish, as will the teen's self-esteem, mental health, spirituality, and social skills.

You may not be comfortable about your son's choice of friends or peer group. This may be because of their image, negative attitudes, or serious behaviors (such as alcohol use, drug use, truancy, violence, sexual behaviors).

Here are some suggestions:

- Check whether your concerns about their friends are real and important.
- Do not attack your child's friends. Remember that criticizing your son's choice of friends is like a personal attack.
- Encourage reflective thinking by helping your son think about his actions in advance and discussing immediate and long-term consequences of risky behavior.
- Encourage your son's independence by supporting decision-making based on principles and not other people.
- Get to know the friends of your son. Learn their names, invite them into your home so you can talk and listen to them, and introduce yourself to their moms and dads.
- Help your son understand the difference between image (expressions of youth culture) and identity (who he is).
- If you believe your concerns are serious, talk to your teenager about behavior and choices -- not the friends.
- Keep the lines of communication open and find out why these friends are important to your teenager.
- Let your son know of your concerns and feelings.
- Remember that we all learn valuable lessons from mistakes.

No matter what kind of peer influence your son faces, he must learn how to balance the value of going along with the crowd (connection) against the importance of making principle-based decisions (independence).

And you must ensure that your son knows that he is loved and valued as an individual at home.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:51AM (-07:00)

## I was on the verge of asking my 16 year old young lady to leave and...

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Hello Mark,

Thank you for your contact. This morning I was on the verge of asking my 16 year old young lady to leave and find a new place to live.

After watching and reading the first part of your advice I feel MUCH stronger.

I don't want to lose my daughter, I want her back fighting for MY team not the team of rudeness and emotional emptiness she seems to be in.

Thank you!!

I.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:57AM (-07:00)

## I want to believe this was the turning point but have been crushed ...

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Mark,

It only took 6 weeks of being off probation and now M is in deep trouble. He did start school on time and was going (did miss one day). He is cont to stay out most weekends and we have no clue who with, where, or doing what. He did buy his own pay as you go phone (will not share the number with us).

Friday he was gone when we got home (as usual). We had a fundraiser to attend and didn't get home until past midnight. He was still gone, but had to work the next morning so we figured he had a ride. I get a call from him @ 4am from the local police station. He is being charged with "home invasion 3rd degree" and going to the county jail. Of course he only admits to taking a bike from a garage (confirmed that it was garages only and not entering houses) but told wrong is wrong. Lately garages have been entered and things taken from cars--GPS, Laptops, I-pods etc. Not sure if he is involved with this or not.

Because he is 17 and considered an adult in MI we are totally in the dark. He was arraigned and had prelim hearing without us being notified. Bail is \$5000, and we are not planning on getting him out unless we can't stand it. His next hearing is Monday. He is calling us constantly to bail him out--he is changed, etc. Husband is starting to cave, g'ma thinks I'm a callous heartless Mother. Other friends/colleagues think we should let him be. It is becoming extremely difficult to hold firm with this. Husband also saying he may go post bond with or without my consent/approval since he is the major wage earner. We kept telling M he would be responsible for any other problems since he was considered an adult, and he kept saying he was 17, didn't have any rules and could do whatever he

wanted. School counselor says he can make up any missed work, but would be very difficult to accomplish and his opinion is to post bond. We would at least like to see the police report and be able to talk to his court appointed atty, if possible to help us better determine his involvement (impossible at this point due to his age).

Visiting isn't until Sunday (we opted to not go this past Sunday when he really only wanted us to go in order to bring his girlfriend) His latest phone call was to use his life savings (about \$500) and call a bail bondsman. He also says he has information for the police that he needs to share with them before XYZ kid gets out of jail. All of this is starting to wear me down.

Mark, what is the best thing? I do want him to go to school now and not miss any more (he got 5 A's and 1 B last semester). I don't want more upheaval in my home--is it likely to get worse if we continue to refuse? How would you feel about this latest offer? Is 4-5 days in jail (for now) enough? He may get additional jail time depending if the charges are dealt down, and what his sentence would be and all that would be out of our control anyways. Is he ready for change or is this just because it's too uncomfortable? He has been in the youth home 4 times--2 domestic violence (1 day then 3 days) then 2 probation violations (24 days and 3 days) and NEVER called us and now is calling constantly begging us to help him out.

I want to believe this was the turning point but have been crushed too many times and don't know the right answer. Please help.

He still has no privileges--no car, no license, no job (lost this due to being held in jail and missing work), pay as you go phone, no laundry services, etc. Does have a laptop and i-pod (gifts) and don't want him ruining my computer. We don't drive him (Dad will drive him but to/from work only).

Again, thanks

J

.....

Hi J.,

*Re: Mark, what is the best thing?*

I think you may already know what I'm going to say here. To bail him out is to return to over-indulgent parenting, which will have a negative consequence associated with it -- for both you and your husband.

*Re: I don't want more upheaval in my home--is it likely to get worse if we continue to refuse?*

To refuse to bail? In the short run, possibly. But in the long run, no. He will get a much better life-lesson sitting behind bars than he will sitting at a desk.

*Re: How would you feel about this latest offer? Is 4-5 days in jail (for now) enough?*

Maybe.



Re: *Is he ready for change or is this just because it's too uncomfortable?*

He's sincere while his in jail. But without some serious discomfort, his sincerity will be short lived.

If it only took 6 weeks for him to forget about being on probation, how long do you think it will be before he forgets he was incarcerated (in the event that you bail him out)?

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:18AM (-07:00)

**We've both cried the past couple of hours at how destructive our "p...**

**Thursday, September 18, 2008**

Dear Mark,

My wife and I are finishing Lesson #1. My God!!! We've been the worst kind of indulgent parents, thinking all the time that we were doing the good thing for our son. Quite frankly, we've both cried the past couple of hours at how destructive our "parenting" has been. Just the opposite of what we wanted. Your program is 100% on the money in terms of describing the issues. Glad we found your site, and hope it's not too late.

As some additional background, up until 2 1/2 years ago, I was heavily engaged with my son. We played paintball, R\_\_ raced BMX for 6 years, has won 5 national championships and we spent 2-3 days a week at the track and traveling out of town to races, fishing, camping. 2 1/2 years ago, because of financial issues, I took a job with an emergency management agency that has me traveling across the U.S. for 6-7 months at a time with only a week or two in between. I feel so bad! I see now that in spite of my good intentions, I essentially abandoned my boy, hence his hooking up with this "friend" of his. His attitude is sullen, he's unhappy, angry, dresses like a skin head, and is lying to us, chipping with marijuana (we've had him drug tested). In spite of our apprehension, my wife and I are anxious to get our son back. Below is a set of expectations we've come up with. Are we on the right track?

Thanks,

B. & A.

ISSUES FOR R\_\_

EXPECTATIONS

Chores:

1. Hang up towels after taking a shower.
2. Pick up dirty clothes and put them in hamper.
3. Keep your bathroom neat.
4. Keep your room picked up. Clean and vacuum your room once a week.
5. Take out trash, including emptying your bathroom wastebasket.
6. Keep truck clean. Clean inside and out once a week.
7. Help with dinner cleanup as requested.
8. After a meal, pick-up/scrape dishes and put in sink.

Allowance: For consistently doing chores, you will earn \$15.00 a week. To earn additional money, ask us for things you can do around the house. (Wash windows, wash the van, etc.)

Behavior:

1. That you will not drink alcohol.
2. That you will not do drugs.
3. That you will not steal, or be with people who do steal.
4. That you will be honest and "do what's right" even if no one is watching. Think independently. Say "no" to friends who want to involve you in illegal behavior.
5. That you will be respectful of your mother and me and other adults.
6. That you will be home at the designated time and will abide by set curfew.
7. That you will complete school and homework as required.
8. Self respect for your health, appearance, physical well being.

Consequences:

Violation of the above house rules will result in "consequences". These consequences will include:

1. Loss of phone privileges.
2. Loss of driving privileges.
3. Loss of television privileges.
4. Loss of video game privileges.
5. Loss of freedom (grounding). Earn freedom by accepting discipline, reasonable expectations, and a positive attitude.

.....

Hi B.,

Re: Are we on the right track?

I think this is largely on track. Some things fall into the "gray area," which simply means there are multiple ways to do it right.

My biggest concern with what I hear from you so far is that you may be moving to fast. I've said it before, but let me repeat: Only implement session #1 assignments in week one ...session #2 assignments in week two ...and so on.

Slow down a bit. Working too hard to make up for lost time may result in more lost time.

Mark

.....

Thank you Mark. You're right, we were so anxious for change we jumped the gun. Will "back off" a bit and take it a week at a time. Surprisingly, we had a good conversation with him last night. And, while normally towels and clothes are consistently left on the bathroom and bedroom floor, he picked up and straightened his bathroom and bedroom. We gave him lots of praise and as you mentioned, he seems a bit confused. Can't decide if he wants to be angry or accepting. Will continue to work the program. Thanks again for the hope. B. & A.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:08AM (-07:00)

## It is fantastic!

Friday, September 19, 2008

Hi,

My husband and I have been going through your program together. We are about half way thru' and are truly impressed with the results. It is fantastic!

S.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:39AM (-07:00)

## Adolescence and Narcissistic Disorder—

Friday, September 19, 2008

One of the less common adolescent personality disorders, but one that is nevertheless growing, is narcissistic personality disorder. This is the only learned personality disorder, and usually begins in the adolescent years. Teenagers with low self-esteems begin to develop fantasies and grandiose views of themselves when they have narcissistic personality disorders. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, about one percent of the population (and one percent of teenagers) suffers from narcissistic personality disorder. Most narcissists (between an estimated 50 and 75 percent) are male.

The history of narcissistic personality disorder:

The name for narcissistic personality disorder comes from Greek mythology. In the tale, a young man, Narcissus, spurned those who sought his love. He was very good-looking, and quite full of himself. In fact, he was so good-looking that he thought himself as beautiful as the gods. No woman or man could please him. Then, one day, he fell in love with the reflection of himself in a pond. He stared at the reflection, reveling in its beauty, until he wasted away. Other stories end with him falling into the pond and drowning as he moves closer to get a better look. Like Narcissus, adolescents with narcissistic

personality disorder have an exaggerated sense of self-importance, and rarely consider others' feelings, preferring to seek the attention that confirms their own grandiose ideas.

Difference between adolescent narcissism and adolescent narcissistic personality disorder:

A certain degree of selfishness, self-importance and narcissism is to be expected during the teenager years. Indeed, when one has a personality style considered narcissistic, he or she is usually a general healthy person in a psychological regard. However, such people, although arrogant and proud at times, do not rely on others to help them maintain a healthy self-esteem, and they do not cherish unrealistic images of their skills and abilities.

On the other hand, adolescent narcissistic personality disorder takes a different form. Teenagers with this personality disorder are unable to establish a stable self-image that includes an accurate assessment of skills. They feel entitled to special treatment, and when they receive perceived slights to their grandiose perception of their own skills and importance, they may become angry and sometimes violent.

Some signs of pathological narcissism - adolescent narcissistic personality disorder:

- Arrogant and haughty behavior
- Belief that others envy the person
- Does not consider others' feelings
- Expectations of special treatment
- Exploits other people
- Fantasies about having exceptional success, attractiveness or power
- Need for constant praise and validation
- Over-emphasis on achievements and exaggeration of one's skills

Developmental factors that contribute to adolescent narcissistic personality disorder:

- Excessive admiration that does not receive a balance of realistic feedback
- Learned manipulative behaviors from other sources
- Overindulgence from parents
- Oversensitive temperament from birth
- Parents over-praise and value as a way to increase their own self-esteem
- Severe childhood emotional abuse
- Unreliable or unpredictable care giving from parents

Treating adolescent narcissistic personality disorder:

It is very difficult to treat teenager narcissistic personality disorder because an adolescent is usually already in such a fragile mental state. Often, treatment is met with contempt, as the teenager perceives the therapist-client relationship as one that does not properly affirm the adolescent's perception of self. The goal is teach the teenager to value him or herself on a more realistic level and to adjust one's thinking about others' value in relation to his or her own. Exercises to help the adolescent develop empathy for others are part of the treatment of this personality disorder. Medication is usually not used, except sparingly in cases where depression and anxiety come out as symptoms while the adolescent struggles to cope with a new reality.

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:39AM (-07:00)

## She got a little award at assembly the other day for "improved beha...

Sunday, September 21, 2008

Hi Mark,

Hope things are fine with you.

I thought I'd give you a bit of an up date from down under. Over the past month we have had two meetings with A\_\_\_'s school principle, the school counsellor and her teacher, and things have been fairly positive from a school point of view. The principle is a great guy and was very keen to know what we were dealing with at home as the problems at school are less intense. He asked me to email him the basic management principles of your e-book and said the school would do as much as they could to keep Anna on track. I now get a weekly report on her progress from her class teacher and they are now working out the classes for next year with a view to giving her the best teacher and appropriate classmates to minimise disputes. She got a little award at assembly the other day for "improved behavior in the classroom" so that was good.

We are so grateful for the chance your program has given us and I feel so fortunate for having discovered you online!! We are still dealing with bad behavior at home but it is, as you forecast, a little less stressful and frequent.

Thanks Mark,

L.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:28AM (-07:00)

## Cell Phone Problems

Sunday, September 21, 2008

Hi Mark,

K's behaviour towards me has significantly improved since he lost his phone twice in one week (for 48 hrs each time).

However, last night he was rude. When I told him to hand over his phone, he refused and said I'd have to physically wrestle him to get it (that would end badly, I knew).

Instead of getting physical, I said until he gives me his phone for 48hrs, I would not be driving him anywhere. He is holding out still, but it has only been one day (he threatened to get his father to drive him, but interesting didn't pursue it, and instead missed cricket training).

My question is: should I continue with this position, or should I snatch it from him when I have the chance, and hide it? (He would probably rampage, but if that's what has to happen, I can live with it).

I would be grateful for your perspective.

V.

.....

Hi V.,

First of all, "he was rude" is very vague. What did he actually say or do?

Second, what is he doing to "earn" cell phone privileges?

Whenever a child introduces a new problem on top of an existing one, parents should put the new problem in the "deal-with-it-later" file (\*please see Q & A - On Discipline in the chapter of the eBook entitled "The Art of Saying No" – Session #2 – online version).

Re: ...he refused and said I'd have to physically wrestle him to get it...

In this case, he is grounded, but the clock does not start until he hands you the cell (\*please see Instructional Videos #16 and #17).

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:33PM (-07:00)

## Game Addiction

Sunday, September 21, 2008

Mark,

Read your book -- loved it and it helped. My son J\_\_, an extremely intelligent, confident, socially comfortable 16-year-old, is addicted to the computer game World of Warcraft (wow for short). Like other addicts (ex. alcoholics), is it necessary for him to "want" to change in order for us to get wow out of his life? Computers are necessary for his school research and submittal of assignments, so even if he is "detoxing" he'll need to use one. He has access to computers at school, friend's houses & internet cafes.

Background info:

1. Parents divorced when he was 8, lives with mother but visits father (who he doesn't like)
2. He's resistant to authority and doesn't feel the need to try to please anyone, but also doesn't act out by doing drugs/drinking/deviant behavior
3. He says he loves the game so much because it's challenging and he's so good at it. All his friends play.

4. He has played for hours on end, staying up all night on weekends, neglecting schoolwork to play. I used your program to set up a consequence program and it helped, except that he is totally willing to risk consequences to play this game, so we are in a negative cycle, which is why I am asking about the possibility of addiction and the need to approach this differently.

Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

K.

.....

Hi K.,

Here's the definition of addiction in general:

1. An individual needs more and more of a substance or behavior to keep him/her going.
2. If the individual does not get more of the substance or behavior, he/she becomes irritable and miserable.

Compulsive gaming meets these criteria, and game addicts can indeed experience severe withdrawal symptoms (e.g., anger, violence, depression).

Research suggests gambling elevates dopamine. But there's more to addiction than brain chemistry. Even with drugs or alcohol, it's not just physical – there's a psychological component to the addiction, knowing "I can escape or feel good about my life."

The addict is trying to change the way he feels by taking something outside himself. The alcoholic learns, "I don't like the way I feel, so I'll take a couple shots of whiskey." For gamers, it's the fantasy world that makes them feel better.

The lure of a fantasy world is especially pertinent to online role-playing games. These are games in which a player assumes the role of a fictional character and interacts with other players in a virtual world. An intelligent child who is unpopular at school can become dominant in the game. The virtual life becomes more appealing than real life.

Too much gaming may seem relatively harmless compared with the dangers of a drug overdose, but video game addiction can ruin lives. Children who play four to five hours per day have no time for socializing, doing homework, or playing sports. That takes away from normal social development. You can get a 21-year-old with the emotional intelligence of a 12-year-old. He's never learned to talk to girls. He's never learned to play a sport.

Spending a lot of time gaming doesn't necessarily qualify as an addiction. 80% of the world can play games safely. The question is: Can you always control your gaming activity?

According to the Center for On-Line Addiction, warning signs for video game addiction include:

- Feeling irritable when trying to cut down on gaming
- Gaming to escape from real-life problems, anxiety, or depression

- Lying to friends and family to conceal gaming
- Playing for increasing amounts of time
- Thinking about gaming during other activities

In addition, video game addicts tend to become isolated, dropping out of their social networks and giving up other hobbies. It's about somebody who has completely withdrawn from other activities. One mother called me when her son dropped out of baseball. He used to love baseball, so that's when she knew there was a problem.

The overwhelming majority of video game addicts are males under 30. It's usually children with poor self-esteem and social problems. They're intelligent and imaginative but don't have many friends at school. A family history of addiction may also be a factor.

If you're concerned your child may be addicted to video games don't dismiss it as a phase. Keep good documents of the child's gaming behavior, including:

- How the child reacts to time limits
- Logs of when the child plays and for how long
- Problems resulting from gaming

You need to document the severity of the problem. Don't delay seeking professional help; if there is a problem, it will probably only get worse.

Treatment for video game addiction is similar to detox for other addictions, with one important difference. Computers have become an important part of everyday life, as well as many jobs, so compulsive gamers can't just look the other way when they see a PC.

It's like a food addiction. You have to learn to live with food.

Because video game addicts can't avoid computers, they have to learn to use them responsibly. That means no gaming. As for limiting game time to an hour a day, I compare that to an alcoholic saying he's "only going to drink beer."

The toughest part of treating video game addicts is that it's a little bit more difficult to show somebody they're in trouble. Nobody's ever been put in jail for being under the influence of a game.

The key is to show gamers they are powerless over their addiction, and then teach them real-life excitement as opposed to online excitement.

To make the games less seductive, find ways to minimize your child's downtime at home, especially those times when he is alone. Maybe your child would be interested in arts and crafts, theater, or movie-making. Maybe a social-skills group would be a good idea. Maybe he could join a youth group at your church or synagogue.

If he has trouble with a particular sport because of poor motor skills, or has difficulty understanding the rules or strategies, look for another sport that might be more accommodating - for example, martial arts, bowling, or swimming. Help your child find some activity that he likes and a place where he can do it.

Give warning times: "You have 15 more minutes... You now have 10 minutes... There are only five minutes left." A timer that is visible to the child can be helpful. When the buzzer



rings, say, "I know you need to reach a point where you can save the game. If you need a few more minutes, I will wait here and let you have them."

If he continues to play despite your step-by-step warnings, do not shout or grab the game or disconnect the power. Calmly remind him of the rules, then announce that for each minute he continues to play, one minute will be subtracted from the time allowed the next day (or days). Once you get the game back, lock it up. When he finally regains the privilege to play, say, "Would you like to try again to follow the family rules?"

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:59PM (-07:00)

## Violence On The Rise Among Children?

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mark,

I'm a member of your program. As a middle school teacher (NY), it appears to me that children are becoming more and more violent over time. This greatly concerns me as well as the other teachers in my district. In your work, do you find that childhood violence is on the rise? If so, what can teachers do in the schools to intervene? Is there any research on any of this?

Thanks in advance,

T.J.

.....

Hi T.,

There is a great concern about the incidence of violent behavior among kids and teens. This complex and troubling issue needs to be carefully understood by moms & dads, teachers, and other adults.

Kids as young as preschoolers can show violent behavior. Moms & dads and other adults who witness the behavior may be concerned, however, they often hope that the young youngster will "grow out of it." Violent behavior in a youngster at any age always needs to be taken seriously. It should not be quickly dismissed as "just a phase they're going through!"

Violent behavior in kids and teens can include a wide range of behaviors:

- cruelty toward animal
- explosive temper tantrum
- fighting
- fire setting
- intentional destruction of property and vandalism
- physical aggression
- threats or attempts to hurt others (including homicidal thoughts)

- use of weapon

Numerous research studies have concluded that a complex interaction or combination of factors leads to an increased risk of violent behavior in kids and teens. These factors include:

- Being the victim of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse
- Brain damage from head injury
- Combination of stressful family socioeconomic factors (poverty, severe deprivation, marital breakup, single parenting, unemployment, loss of support from extended family)
- Exposure to violence in media (TV, movies, etc.)
- Exposure to violence in the home and/or community
- Genetic (family heredity) factors
- Presence of firearms in home
- Previous aggressive or violent behavior
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol

Kids who have several risk factors and show the following behaviors should be carefully evaluated:

- Becoming easily frustrated
- Extreme impulsiveness
- Extreme irritability
- Frequent loss of temper or blow-ups
- Intense anger

Moms & dads and teachers should be careful not to minimize these behaviors in kids. Whenever a parent or other adult is concerned, they should immediately arrange for a comprehensive evaluation by a qualified mental health professional. Early treatment by a professional can often help.

The goals of treatment typically focus on helping the youngster to:

- learn how to control his/her anger
- express anger and frustrations in appropriate ways
- be responsible for his/her actions
- accept consequences

In addition, family conflicts, school problems, and community issues must be addressed.

Research studies have shown that much violent behavior can be decreased or even prevented if the above risk factors are significantly reduced or eliminated. Most importantly, efforts should be directed at dramatically decreasing the exposure of kids and teens to violence in the home, community, and through the media. Clearly, violence leads to violence.

In addition, the following strategies can lessen or prevent violent behavior:

- Early intervention programs for violent youngsters
- Monitoring youngster's viewing of violence on TV/videos/movies
- Prevention of youngster abuse (use of programs such as parent training, family support programs, etc.)

·Sex education and parenting programs for teens

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:30AM (-07:00)

## She took \$40.00 instead of \$20.00 out of my account...

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mark,

My daughter is on three day restriction for disobeying me. On Saturday I gave her my debit card to get gas and 20.00 for spending -- both of which she earned. However I just saw on my bank statement ...she took 40.00 instead of 20.00 out of my account. Should I make her earn the other 20 or should I take 20 my brother gives her for taking their son to school?

Please help.

.....

Good question.

She was being sneaky, which should get a consequence. Earning the \$20.00 that was basically stolen seems to be the best option. Also, give her a clear warning that if this happens again, she will not be able to use your debit card (just pay cash).

Sound O.K.?

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:34AM (-07:00)

## I fear it is too late...

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Dear Mark,

I Googled my 'problem teenager' and came up with your website. I bought the manual, and it is precisely what I needed.

I fear it is too late though, as my teen daughter is leaving home on the day she is 16 to live with a guy 25 years old, whom she said she met on holiday in Lanzarote, when she was 10. He is unemployed and has Diabetes. She is on the phone to him every day. She's flunked school, her exams, and thrown away an amazing singing/acting talent.

Your book describes her behaviour precisely, 'Overindulged'.

I will put into practice that which is in the book and hope that we can turn her round before August.

Having been through family services, the police, social services and the courts and still not got a solution, what a relieve it is to know that there is somebody out there who seems to know what they are talking about. Many many thanks. You have at the very least given me cause for hope, thank you.

Hugh,

Great Britain.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:46AM (-07:00)

## He loves to save his money...

Friday, September 26, 2008

Hi Mark,

Hope you are well. I've been meaning to email you for a while. I thought this was interesting. This is about the over indulgence section of your program. We used to take our son to Taco Bell after school, or just whenever he might ask. Now, though, when he asks if we're out and about, we tell him we'll be glad to drive by there for him, as long as he has money for what he wants. I can only remember once in the last several months when he actually ended up going. He usually passes on going when he realizes we won't be paying (he still asks every now and then thinking we will forget I guess). The one time he did go and use his own money, he couldn't stand spending that dollar. He loves to save his money, and this is certainly a great lesson on how easily it is spent.

Once in these last few months, we all went to Taco Bell for dinner. Therefore, we paid for him. It was what the family was having, so that's why we paid.

Anyway, thanks for this great tip. It's working out great!

S.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:50AM (-07:00)

## How successful is house arrest?

Friday, September 26, 2008

Hi Mark,

I am planning on one lesson per week. I have not skipped forward and understand the process. My challenge is that L\_\_ is in the hall for 30 days. On Oct. 9 we go back to court

and the judge will decide if L\_\_ goes to a foster home and out of our care. I find your lessons very informative and eye-opening. The DA wants him to spend 30 days in the hall and then 30 days under house arrest (ankle bracelet). If we can get through the next 3 months, he can start high school as his expulsion order expires. I am writing a letter to the judge explaining that we are on your program and do not want to lose L\_\_ to the system.

Our challenge with the house arrest is that we think L\_\_ will allow his friends in the house and he will still snoop around. I've had to take the phones with me when I go to work because he made over 400 hours of calls. He needs 100% supervision. How successful is house arrest?

Thanks,

M.

.....

Hi M.,

Thanks for committing to the program as it is intended.

Re: *How successful is house arrest?*

First of all, "house arrest" is simply where the child must stay home under parental supervision. I think you're referring to "home monitoring" (different from house arrest in that probation will be notified if your son gets out of range).

In any event, there's good and bad news here--

The good news: Home monitoring has an excellent track record because the child knows there is always somebody "watching" to see if he steps outside the house -- even when parents/grandparents are away.

The bad news: Home monitoring is usually only effective for as long as the child is on the monitor -- and it cannot control who your son invites in the house while you're gone.

More bad news: House arrest (if that is what we're talking about here) is a miserable failure on all fronts as far as I'm concerned.

Bottom line: You can't depend on home monitoring, house arrest - or even probation to "solve" the problems. That why it's good you have some new parenting tools in your toolbox now.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Grandson

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:08AM (-07:00)

# When Parents Disagree On Discipline

Sunday, September 28, 2008

My husband & I have very different parenting styles & that has really worked against us over the years ...I tend to be strict while my husband is not & I feel that I need to compensate for his lack of discipline & follow through. I'm constantly clashing with my kids & tired of being the wicked witch.

.....

When parents have different disciplining styles, there's bound to be dissention and arguing. Tension's a given anytime two or more people work on the same project but each take a different approach.

Co-parenting is similar to any other partnership. Each person brings to the table what's been learned along the way. As parents, we're influenced by the disciplinary approaches we experienced growing up, and we tend to apply them to our children-often without first talking them through with our partner.

Imagine a baseball team-eager to win a game-but guided by two coaches who follow different rules and dish out contradictory information. Imagine the tension and the reactions of the players as they witness the coaches quarreling. If you and your husband fight in front of the children, you may not be aware of the ways in which they are affected. Some children may learn "that must be the way people resolve conflicts." Others may learn how to play one parent against the other, which causes even more confusion and distress in the family.

Here are some strategies that can be helpful:

1. Agree on a signal to alert both of you that the conversation is, or is about to, get too heated and needs to be halted. Make a commitment both to honor – and act on the signal. You might walk away and have an agreed-upon cooling off period. Or set a time to revisit your differences in opinion. Or write down what you're feeling and later share it with your partner, who might better understand where you're coming from.
2. Be prepared for behavioral problems. Remember that many changes in kids' behaviors are linked to their stage of normal development. It should come as no surprise that your toddler becomes defiant or your preschooler has an occasional temper tantrum. Talk ahead of time about how each of you would handle these predictable situations. That way you'll have fewer conflicts when they occur.
3. Create your own family "rulebook." Write clear, reasonable, attainable rules (for both parents and kids) about what behavior is acceptable and what isn't. Your family, like a baseball team, will be more successful when you have clear guidelines.
4. Do not to go overboard in trying to avoid arguments. Having small squabbles in front of the kids – and then resolving them peacefully – can actually be good for them; it shows that it's possible to disagree with someone you love, and that relationships don't end just because people are quarreling with each other.

5. Don't be trapped by your past. That includes both your own childhood and the style of

discipline you may have used in an earlier marriage. Look for ways to explore, with your spouse, your unquestioned assumptions about disciplining kids. One good way to do that is to take a parenting class together. That does two things: It helps you realize how differently other people respond to the same situations you face as parents, and it gives you and your spouse a common base of information from which to develop your shared approaches to discipline.

6. Don't let negative childhood experiences determine your decision making about discipline. Keep your focus on the positive aspects of your family life in childhood to bring to your current parenting practices. This approach will free you to replace discipline strategies that don't work for both parents because of beliefs based in families of origin with solution-focused practices that respect and continue the positive experiences of both parents' childhoods.

7. Have a conversation about the ways childhood histories may be influencing the disagreement about discipline. Take a problem-solving approach to identify: (1) What is the specific child-rearing issue that is causing disagreement between parents? (2) What are the feelings and beliefs that each parent has about the issue that may be rooted in childhood family history? (3) What problem-solving alternatives can each of you commit to that will resolve the disagreement and unite both parents in adapting the beliefs and practices of your families of origin to your family life today?

8. Negotiate a Plan in Calm Waters. Sit down with your spouse and try to agree on ways to discipline at a time when nothing is wrong. When you discuss things calmly, you're more likely to come up with a plan you can both stick to. This will allow you to talk about what's best for your child, and not "who's right."

9. Present a Unified Front. Kids understand when their moms & dads feel differently about disciplining, no matter what their age. Kids will often get away with misbehaving simply by creating an argument between you and your spouse — and this not only lets them off the hook, it creates a problem between the moms & dads. Make sure that your child sees both parents following the same guidelines, no matter what the scenario. Once your kids start receiving the same treatment from both parents, they'll stop using your disagreements as a way to avoid punishment.

10. Put your childhood experiences in historical perspective. Gender roles, child safety issues, environmental factors, and cultural norms change dramatically across the generations. What worked for your family 'back in the day' may not transfer comfortably to your current family situation. What are the issues in modern family life that trigger a strong belief that the values and child-rearing practices from your childhood are important to uphold and continue in your own family?

11. Recognize that strong beliefs about child rearing may have their basis in childhood family experiences. At the same time, know that your spouse's beliefs have the same powerful roots.

12. Recognize What Your Arguments Do to Your Kids. No child likes to see his or her parents fight. When you argue about what to do with your kids, you create a troubling environment for them, which could have serious long-term effects. Fighting with your spouse shifts the focus away from your child — and how they can learn to stop misbehaving — and on to a "parent versus parent" situation.

13. Remember the positive experiences from your childhood. Think about your everyday life rather than the major events. What was going on around you during those happy times? It's fun to share these memories with your family, so make them a part of your traditions and family life. What are the positive values and childhood experiences that you want to uphold and continue in your family?

14. Remember your successes. During your marriage, you and your husband have undoubtedly successfully negotiated many situations -- with each of you both giving and taking a little until you reached some middle ground. You can also be successful at ending arguments in front of the kids if you really want to. It won't be easy, but it will be rewarding. And your kids will be the ultimate winners.

15. Seek professional help from a good Marriage & Family Therapist if you continue to struggle with co-parenting issues.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:34AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Alcohol Abuse

Monday, September 29, 2008

I am writing this e-mail hoping that you might be able to shed some light on where it is that I should start your program with our son. I purchased your e-book My Out of Control Teen and found it to be very resourceful and helpful, although I am not quite sure where to start with our son. He will be 17 next month. We recently moved to a new home that we built which is closer to his school and friends. Within 2 days of our move from an acreage to the city he brokeup with his girlfriend of 1 year, quit his job, ranaway to a friends house, pierced his lip against our wishes, threatened suicide in a letter where he wrote that after being gone 5 days he went and pierced his lip and we would have to accept this and his other personal problem being suicidal thoughts. At this point I went at midnight searching for him and found him and brought him home. Since prior to this event things seemed great, he was on the honor role at school, happy, working good to his brother and sister, which is still good. We had to assume he might be on some kind of drugs. I insisted that he be drug tested and hormone testing for depression. I met with school counsellor and explained the situation. One week later he snuck out on a school night through his bedroom window and got drunk. Same thing one week later. After this we nailed his window shut. Which I should say when he returned home the first time his car was parked and phone taken away. He did not care that these privileges were gone. After the third time he ran away, because I confronted him about his report card and marks all in the 60's which is very poor for him.

We decided that this was the last straw and we were going to send him to Turnabout Residential Ranch for three months. He was very terrified of this, after talking and agreeing to see professional counsellors, we opted for a behavior contract and counselling. Things have been better but he is still angry and the counsellor said he is not depressed and that he is closed off at the appts. and as long as things are good at home he can have a break from counselling since he sits there not speaking anyway. He did get a job, but is working with his friends, and not focusing on school work. I feel that according to your e-book that he is at a stage 5. He also came home drunk both nights last weekend. I fear he is drinking way too much. He was not allowed out the next two days of the long weekend for this behavior. Our home life has always been good. We



have been blessed with a wonderful family. There has never been any abuse. We are guilty of spoiling our kids to a degree, but have always expected them to work and helpout. I feel if I impose too many restrictions on him he will runaway again, even though that is one of the rules in the behavior contract. He is quiet, but has always been that way. He was never disrespectful until the last two months. He also lying about where he is going sometimes. His drug test was negative and he was tested for everything. He also took the earring out at our insistance, which was appreciated. I have always told him that we have rules because we love him. If you have any suggestions, they would be very much appreciated. I am still seeing the counsellor.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

You've listed numerous problems here. Alcohol abuse seems to be the most pressing issue. Moms & dads often assume that teenagers try alcohol and drugs to rebel or to "fit in" with their peer group. However, teenagers with undiagnosed emotional or behavioral problems often use drugs and alcohol as a way to relieve their frustrations. A depressed teen may self-medicate with alcohol to escape the terrible sense of hopelessness. Unfortunately, alcohol only exacerbates the problem.

Drugs like ecstasy and other club-drug uppers may even make them feel "normal" when for weeks they have felt miserable. The impact of such drugs on serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins, chemicals in the brain that regulate mood, can be devastating for teenagers and adolescents. The damage they do to receptors in the brain can make the road back from depression even harder.

Often moms & dads approach the issue of drug and alcohol use as simply a discipline issue for a teen who is "bad." However, your teen may be sick. They may be unable to express to you exactly how they feel. Therefore, contacting a mental health professional such as a psychologist or psychiatrist who specializes in the treatment of adolescents, is your first step in nailing down the source of the problem. If your teen is self-medicating to treat depression, anxiety, or other emotional or behavioral disorders, simply applying more discipline and creating more rules will not impact the underlying problem that led to substance abuse in the first place.

While some teenagers self-medicate to treat depression, other teenagers end up with a serious mental disorder due to abuse of drugs or alcohol. Abusive drinking or drug use can seriously undermine your teen's physical, emotional, and psychological health. Some drugs, such as methamphetamines, can seriously affect the neurotransmitters, which are known as the "messengers of the brain." Recent studies suggest this damage can be long-lasting and even permanent. Many teenagers have the mistaken notion that club drugs are benign. In fact, while they might feel "good" while taking them, they can make it difficult for the teen to feel good naturally for a long time to come. The longer teenagers use these drugs, the more difficult treatment and the higher rate of relapse due to their inability to "feel good" or even "normal" because of the damage to their neurotransmitters.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:18AM (-07:00)

## Teen Doesn't Want To Work

Monday, September 29, 2008

Hi Mark - thank you again - your online lessons are very valuable! I feel much more at peace and hope they will make a difference soon. Need your advice.....

Our 16 year old was all gung ho to get a job at the local Y as a lifeguard (he is certified) - he filled out the application, got called for an interview and agreed to go tomorrow at 3pm for the interview - now he is decided he doesn't want to work there - we have tried to find out why - lots of excuses (he knows someone who did that and hated it, the water test will be too hard, the pay will be too low etc) We think he is making a big mistake - we tell him he will have no issues passing the test and he should go thru with it and it will be a great job a couple of days a week to get extra gas money. He's says he is going to call and cancel the interview - he claims he will look for another job later.....we don't want to get in a fight and have tried to talk to him calmly about it - I think he just afraid he won't do well or something.....what to do?

.....

I would say this one falls into the "pick-your-battles-carefully" category. You're right in not wanting to fight about this. I presume you have bigger fish to fry (or will).

He's not going to tell you what's up ...and the more you pry, the more he will make up his mind to not follow through with this job.

Sometimes less is better. That is true in this case. Let go of YOUR NEED to have him be a lifeguard. He'll do well in whatever he sets HIS mind to.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:07AM (-07:00)

## It is a difficult time at the moment...

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Hi Mark - thanks for 'being there' in cyberspace.

I look forward to improving the home environment and relationships here. It is a difficult time at the moment. I have sought help elsewhere locally, but have been placed in a queue - which doesn't help when things are 'happening'.

Regards,

S.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:53AM (-07:00)

## Kids & Poor Academic Performance

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Hi Mark,

I am writing for advice on how to get my 7th grade son to do his best in school. He is very intelligent, yet does not seem to care about his schoolwork. He easily makes it on the honor role, but with effort he could be on the top honors. Recently, I discovered that he got a 40% on a Spanish quiz. I asked if he could retake it and he made up some story. After emailing the teacher I discovered that he did retake it during his detention time (which I knew nothing about) and he received the same grade. So now he is lying about his work and about having detention. He is a constant disruption in class. Though the teacher has moved his seat several times he still turns around and talks w/others. What can I do about this??? In general, he is liking 7th grade more because he moves from class to class every 40 minutes. I know that he is easily distracted and we try to give talk w/him about things he can do to focus. The problem is that he doesn't seem to care! He is very active in sports. He is on the soccer team and is doing well with that. He is also playing on a town baseball team. I wanted to take him off of the baseball team, but my husband thinks that will only make matters worse. The busier he is, the better his behavior is, but how do I get him to focus more on his schoolwork??

Thank you again for all of your time and support.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Poor academic performance is addressed in the section of the eBook entitled Read these Emails from Exasperated Parents.

Please look toward the bottom of that page where it reads:

"My 16-year-old son brought home straight F's on his last report card. I grounded him for the entire grading period, but he continues to fail in nearly all subjects. I know he is a bright kid and can do the work when he wants to. What can I do to motivate him?"

Let me know if you need clarification,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:06AM (-07:00)

## Re: Regaining Custody of Son

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

My question is that I've only started following the 2nd step of your program when my son decided he was moving in with his father. He fought with his father and refused to see him for the past year and now he is refusing to see me. When I demanded that he be

here, he accused me of "stealing a bottle of wine" from his father's house. His father and I discussed this as I have no means of entering his home nor would I steal a bottle of wine that I bought him over 8 years ago. My son said that is the way I work. I'm an "Indian Giver". I give things and then take them back, meaning that I recently took his cell phone away. He is extremely not making any sense and I'm devastated. His guidance councilor told me that the wine thing was told to him by his father. His father wants nothing more than to have custody of my kids so he won't have to pay support. I am giving him his child support for A\_\_ since A\_\_ is living there, for the past 2 weeks. A\_\_ lived with me the entire last year. I don't want this to continue. We are seeing a councilor tomorrow night and I want this to end. I am asking you for some understanding as to what is going on because I'm confused and I have no family except for them. Please give me your opinions.

Sincerely, P.

.....

If I understand you correctly, your issue here is that you want your son back. I must, of course, issue a disclaimer that what I write here cannot be construed as legal advice. It is, in fact, just general information.

You didn't say who has legal custody currently.

When you agreed to let him stay with his dad, was there some sort of written agreement giving him temporary custody?

Is there a divorce decree giving you custody, and was there ever a court date to re-modify custody changing from you to him?

If there is a divorce decree giving you custody and it was never changed -- and the agreement giving him temporary custody was verbal -- only then notify the police and give them details.

You may have to go back to court to regain custody -- and he has to prove you are an unfit parent.

You can also petition the court to let your son decide who he wants to live with - but don't coach him -- it has to be totally his idea, and if the judge senses he's been coached, he won't honor anything.

This is kind of hard to give an exact answer without knowing the above answers to my questions. Too many variables, but hope this helps. Good luck.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:25AM (-07:00)

## Son Skipping School

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Grrrr.... my 14 year old has started his freshman year and is constantly skipping school. I have received a phone call almost everyday regarding either his behavior or his skipping classes or skipping the whole day. I take him to the door of the school every morning!!! He's rude, hateful, defiant...refuses to listen to me. Talks back and over me everytime I try to have a calm discussion with him. Smart kid being really stupid! The school is of no help!

.....

First you need to make sure your son has an understanding of the relationship between school, grades and going to class and real life and what he will do in the future. By now he should be thinking about college or career choices. He cannot hope to achieve those goals without a decent school record...and that record is more than just grades.

I think you need to start doing some serious thinking about these things, too. It is not always fun to be a parent and give firm guidance, but you need to think about him long-term best interest and the life skills he will need to pursue his goals. Although it may be hard for you to follow through, your son needs to learn to be responsible for his behavior and to accept the consequences of that behavior. That is what grown ups do, and he's nearly a young adult now. He needs to see that school is, in a sense, like a job; in a real job he cannot just skip work because it's a nice day and you don't want to go.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:48AM (-07:00)

## Kicking Out a Minor

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

My son was told he could not stay at home if he continued his behaviour so he went out on Saturday but came back tonight, Tuesday, because he had to go to work. My husband said he can't stay here. What do I do when he comes home at 11pm tonight?

.....

Re: Kicking Out a Minor—

You didn't say how old your son is.

The legal age of majority in all but four states is 18. When a person reaches the state's age of legal majority, parents are no longer financially or legally responsible for them. In which case parents wanting their adult child to move from the family residence is well within their legal rights to take such action. If the person refuses to leave voluntarily the parents may if they so choose enlist the aid of their local police.

States with higher ages of majority than 18-years are: Alabama and Nebraska 19, Mississippi and Pennsylvania 21. In these states parents can petition the court to be released from parental responsibilities if said child is at least 18-years of age.

## Son is angry, failing in school, & refusing to go to school...

Thursday, October 02, 2008

My son is always angry. He hates school and his grades are falling, He does not want to go to school ...he is in grade 10. He is angry all the time. What can I do?

.....

Hi G.,

Re: ...son is always angry.

Please see our webpage entitled: Anger Management for Teens

Re: ...grades are failing.

This is covered in the eBook [online version]. Please look for the section entitled "Read these Emails from Exasperated Parents" ...then scroll to the bottom where we discuss poor academic performance.

Re: ...does not want to go to school.

School refusal is equally common among boys and girls and is most likely to occur between age 5 to 11. Incidence of school refusal is highest when schools reopen after summer.

School refusal is defined as the behavior of resisting or refusing to attend a specific class or to stay in school for an entire day. Such school refusal may be accompanied by one or more of the following behaviors: complaints about stomach pain, headache, or nausea before or during school; crying before and during school; frequent visits to the school nurse; temper tantrums; specific fears; anxiety or sadness.

Truants otherwise tend to be compliant, well-behaved, and academically smart kids. Unlike truants, they stay home only with their moms & dads' knowledge. Generally, they have a close relationship with one or both moms & dads. Overall, they are good kids. So the question arises why does a youngster who wants to comply with the moms & dads' wishes and be good, drive them nuts in the morning when it's time to get ready for school?

Kids refuse to go to school for a reason, and we moms & dads should determine what that reason is.

Some kids refuse to go to school because they are overly anxious. Some may have specific fears or concerns regarding teachers, peers, or some other aspects of the school setting. Others may consciously or unconsciously worry, not about the school as such, but about being away from home. Some overanxious kids are afraid to sleep on their

own, insist on having lights on in their room at night, and have nightmares about their safety or the safety of their moms & dads.

Kids who are overanxious about something at school or home need to be gradually exposed to the situation they want to avoid. Offer them emotional support and encouragement. They need to develop better means to cope with situations that provoke anxiety.

Truants tend to feel that others see them in a negative way. They become unduly self-conscious and avoid social situations in which they fear others may criticize them or make fun of them behind their back. Some have negative and troublesome relationships with their peers, and are, perhaps, teased by mischievous kids or harassed by a bully.

For kids who refuse to go to school in order to avoid a difficult social encounter, teach them effective social behaviors such as, learning to say "no" assertively, seeking help from adults, and making new friends. Seek help from school authorities if there is a genuine concern for the safety of your youngster.

In some cases, school refusal starts out with kids experiencing discomfort in the school setting, but as time goes on, they develop a liking for staying home. It dawns on them how much more fun it is to stay home than to go to school and do the "boring stuff." For example, when "Jake is allowed to stay home, he stays in bed for longer hours, plays with toys or watches TV, and gets to visit his grandparents during the day. If I were Jake, I sure would like to stay home day after day, wouldn't you?

Don't make staying home more rewarding than going to school. Eliminate or reduce all incentives for staying home. On the contrary, attach rewards and incentives to going to school and staying there throughout the school hours.

Some teens suddenly become reluctant to go to school because of an appearance and self-esteem problem, or social "image" problem prompted by a school rumor or being let down by a friend. They need appropriate skills and parental support to deal with such situations. Openness in communication and closeness with moms & dads can be really helpful.

Some kids are clinically depressed and experience significant difficulty in getting up and getting out of bed in the morning. Kids who are clinically depressed or who suffer from an anxiety disorder need professional help. Some medications cause sluggishness and may make it difficult for a youngster to be alert and active in morning. In such event, consult your doc.

Having investigated the possible causes and offered your support as a parent, you may have to "push" your youngster out to school. You may have to learn to ignore the tantrums, complaints, and the pleading to "let me stay home just for today."

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:13AM (-07:00)

# Teens & Tiredness

Thursday, October 02, 2008



Hi Mark,

K's current problems are - bad sleep patterns, and not spending enough time on his study (in fact, almost no time).

Given the success of using the program for his other behaviours (still ups and downs, but he has actually modified his behaviour because of this program), I would like to state these rules & consequences:

1. No sleeping after school (or during the day on weekends). Consequence - phone disabled for 24 hours.

2. At least 1.5 hrs of study per night - in a way that is transparent. that is, when I look in on him, he should be entirely open about what homework he is doing. If he doesn't do enough time, or refuses to tell me what he is doing - Consequence - phone disabled for 24 hrs.

He had a blood test to rule out a medical cause for his tiredness (we get the results in a couple of days) - obviously if there is medical issue and the doctor says he needs more rest, I wouldn't have this rule, but I am confident that won't be the case, and I would like to have clear plan and clear expectations starting from next week.

As always, I appreciate your advice.

Thanks,

V.

.....

Hi V.,

I like it. Good plan.

I wouldn't worry too much about any physical problems related to his being tired. I doubt that the tests will reveal anything. Most teens are at the developmental stage in which there is so much "growth-spurting" going on that tiredness is the rule rather than the exception. During the adolescent growth spurt, more sleep is required than previously because of increased growth (growth essentially goes on only during the hours of sleep). The social pressures of the teen years - staying up late to watch TV, chat on the phone endlessly with friends, or do the homework that should have been done earlier in the evening - when combined with the need to arise early in the morning for school, can easily create a situation in which the adolescent is chronically sleep deprived.

Inadequate sleep usually results in some variation of daytime sleepiness or tiredness, but may also curiously result in hyperactivity, school problems, emotional problems, and



other daytime behavioral difficulties.

Before considering what might be causing “abnormal daytime sleepiness,” it is wise to begin by determining whether your son is even getting enough sleep to begin with. When a child goes to sleep at night and when he awakes in the morning may well be the explanation for sleepiness and lead to easy resolution of it.

For example, a 15-year-old should be getting about 8-3/4 hours of sleep per night. An 18-year-old needs about 8-1/4 hours.

Questions to consider:

Does your son consume any medications or drugs that can influence sleep patterns or lead to daytime sleepiness?

- antihistamines
- anti-seizure medications for epileptic children may cause drowsiness, especially phenobarbital
- caffeine (colas, Mountain Dew, Dr. Pepper, tea)
- chocolate (active ingredient is theobromine, closely related to caffeine with similar effects)
- in adolescents, consider drugs of abuse, notably cocaine, marijuana, and alcohol

Are there any abnormal sleep behaviors?

- abnormal sleep positions (for example, the child cannot sleep unless neck is positioned awkwardly)
- bedwetting
- night terrors or confusional arousals (screaming or crying while not totally awake)
- sleepwalking
- Snoring or sleep apnea (prolonged cessation of loud breathing noises in sleep)

Are there daytime problems with school performance or behavior?

- emotional problems, teariness
- hyperactivity, aggressiveness or disruptive behavior
- inattention, mind wandering
- interference with peer relations
- poor grades - is the child functioning well at grade level?
- sleepiness in class

Hope this helps,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:05AM (-07:00)

## I know I'm too soft!

Saturday, October 04, 2008

Thank you Mark for contacting me, I am trying very hard to do as you say, and most of the time I'm doing really well but i know I'm too soft!

My eldest daughter isn't really naughty, its just the stuff that comes out of her mouth, she does not swear, its just the disrespect and her telling me when she is going to do something. She asked me this weekend if she could go on a sleep over i said no because of the way she had acted shouting and arguing.

She was really upset and really didn't think she had done anything wrong. how do i make her see that she is doing wrong? ...also she has ADHD but very mild ...there is no reasoning with her.

Many thanks M.

.....

Hi M.,

The strategy that applies here is the one entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" (online version – session #3). In this case, you want her to accept a consequence for her choice to shout and argue.

Let me know if you need any clarification after reviewing the strategy listed above.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:57AM (-07:00)

## What should be my course of action?

Saturday, October 04, 2008

Hi Mark

An update on my situation here with my son. He is living with 2 other people now in a townhouse. A friend of my son's mother signed the lease for him. I asked her not to get involved because we were trying to work with him (using your program) to get him back on track. She told him that if he didn't like it here with us that he could move in with her and her family. So when we were do the program he jumped ship and went there. 3 weeks after being at her place he was looking for his own and needed a an adult to sign the lease, this "lovely women" who say she loves him and wants to adopt him stepped up to the plate. Just before he moved out he was doing drugs with one of her kid and had a bad trip and came running home for help because he was afraid that he was dying. We got him into the crisis/detox centre and the "lovely women" went and got him. A week later he moved to his own place. I know that he is into drugs heavy duty now. My husband is getting weekly calls from him to see if they can do something together, before he wouldn't even go any where with his dad and now he phones to see what they can do

together. I am taking your advice keeping my conversation to 30 seconds and no more after he ran out and left the counselling session 3 weeks ago. The counsellor has the attitude that we should just let him run wild and see what happens. How can you as a parent sit back and watch your child destroy himself? He told me that I should continue the counselling session because the warning lights are going off when I was seeing the behaviour change in this kid and I need to resolve what went on in my home as a child. I came from an alcoholic family physically and verbally abusive, both parents and I raised my brother (we are very close, he phones every night to talk to me before he goes to bed). The counsellor told me his kid does drugs, okay is the whole world gone nuts? I thank God that I saw the warning lights going off! The kids living in the townhouse are going to university, it is just a matter of time now I think before they kick his butt to the curb. I think he will have no place to go. Everyone knows what he is up to. If he should ask to come home what should be my course of action? Rehab, not hang around the friends etc. and how do I convince him to want to go to rehab?... How do I get this kid back? Or do they ever come back?

On Monday, I received a call from a mother of one of his old friends named S\_\_\_. This friend was in jail and is in a halfway house now, he had gotten into a fight and the kid died from the fight and he went to jail. One of the kids in the townhouse that lives with my son hangs around a kid named Jim. Jim saw S\_\_\_ and told him that my son is going down the wrong road and that nobody can believe what has happened to this kid with so much potential, that it is unbelievable. S\_\_\_ begged his mother to call me and to see if they can help in any way to get this kid back. S\_\_\_ has changed his life around and the mother said he doesn't want what happened to him to happen to my son. S\_\_\_ wants to meet with him soon, my boy always looked up to S\_\_\_ and copied him ie. dress, mannerisms etc. The mother said she prayed for 2 hours before she called me asking God for strength and that I would be open to talking to her. Do you think that this meeting will help at all? S\_\_\_ is trying to arrange the meeting with his social worker to sit in on it as well. Any help and insight from you would be greatly appreciated. Hey the program was working until he called her to move in.

Thanks A.

.....

Hi A.,

Re: If he should ask to come home what should be my course of action?

You'll want to draft a behavioral contract that stipulates (a) the house rules and (b) the consequences for violating each house rule. Be very specific. [Click Here for more info on contracts.](#)

Re: Do you think that this meeting will help at all?

I don't know. It's worth a shot though.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:07PM (-07:00)

# Re: Children & PTSD

Saturday, October 04, 2008

I'm new and need help. My husband and I adopted our two biological grandsons who both have significant mental health issues. The oldest lives with us and he is 12. The 10 year old lives in the same city as us but in a therapeutic foster home.

Oops. Didn't know that pressing enter would send what I wrote so far. Anyway, the 12 year old has PTSD.

The 12 year old has PTSD (from domestic violence relationship between bio parents), ODD, ADHD, Bipolar disorder, and Intermittent Explosive Disorder. He has been in residential treatment and now home for 7 months. He is now in a day treatment facility and is starting to transition to his home school. That is definitely a step in the right direction. I would say the biggest problem we have is the ODD. We just can't seem to get through to him. We are wits end.

.....

Abuse of kids is increasing in the United States and may be the most common cause of interpersonal traumas and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in kids and teens. Developmental Traumatology, the systematic investigation of the psychiatric and psychobiological impact of overwhelming and chronic interpersonal violence (abuse in childhood) on the developing child, is a relatively new area of study that synthesizes knowledge from an array of scientific fields including: developmental psychopathology, developmental neuroscience, and stress and trauma research.

One active area of research involves the effects of abuse and related stressors on major body stress response systems such as the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, the catecholamine system (the locus ceruleus (LC)- norepinephrine (NE) /sympathetic nervous system (SNS)) and the immune system and the subsequent effects of chronic stress on brain development. To investigate these relationships, researchers at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic have begun to gather data using physiological measures to capture changes in the stress response system. To capture changes in brain development, imaging technology is being used, which provides a non-invasive way to examine differences in brain morphology and physiology.

Results from recent research at the Institute's Developmental Traumatology Laboratory suggest that the overwhelming stress of abuse experiences in childhood is associated with alterations of biological stress systems and with adverse influences on brain development.

In one study, 18 prepubertal abused kids with PTSD and non-traumatized kids with DSM-111-R overanxious disorder (N=10) and healthy controls (N=24) underwent 24 hour urine collection for measurements of urinary free cortisol (UFC), a reflection of HPA axis regulation, and urinary catecholamine excretion. Abused subjects with PTSD excreted significantly greater amounts of UFC and catecholamines than non-abused controls. These biological stress measures correlated positively with duration of the PTSD trauma and symptoms of intrusive thoughts, avoidance, and hyperarousal.

In a second study, 43 abused kids and teens with PTSD and 61 matched controls

underwent comprehensive clinical assessments and an anatomical magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scan. Abused subjects with PTSD had 7.0 % smaller intracranial and 8.0% smaller cerebral volumes than matched controls. The total midsagittal area of corpus callosum, the major interconnection between the two hemispheres that is broadly conceptualized as facilitating intercortical communication, and the middle and posterior regions of the corpus callosum, were smaller in abused subjects.

In contrast, right, left, and total lateral ventricles were proportionally larger than controls, after adjustment for intracranial volume. Intracranial volume robustly correlated positively with age of onset of PTSD trauma (i.e., smaller brains were associated with earlier onset of trauma) and negatively with duration of abuse. Symptoms of intrusive thoughts, avoidance, hyperarousal and dissociation correlated positively with ventricular volume, and negatively with intracranial volume and total corpus callosum and regional measures. The decreased hippocampal volume reported in adult PTSD was not found in these subjects.

These data suggest that chronically abused kids with a diagnosis of PTSD manifest alterations of major biological stress systems including adverse influences on brain development. Although based on a cross sectional analysis, and thus causation cannot be proven, these findings are intriguing and may have important social policy and treatment implications. Elucidating the biological sequelae and mechanisms of symptom production in PTSD and associated comorbid psychiatric disorders will pave the way to better clinical and social treatment of abused kids. Accordingly, prospective longitudinal studies in Developmental Traumatology are critical to the effort to develop early interventions to attenuate the psychobiological dysregulation and adverse effects on brain development associated with abuse.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:27PM (-07:00)

## Mother Calls Police on Daughter

Monday, October 06, 2008

Hi Mark,

Thought I was doing great! However Y\_\_\_ got very angry about me taking her phone when she was keeping her sister and me awake... I was calm and said she could have it in the morning but on following me downstairs hurled verbal abuse etc when I wouldn't give phone back ...eventually when other daughter started screaming at both of us Y\_\_\_ threatened me and took out pair of scissors and hit me and thumped me, I replied that if she hit me again I would call the police, ultimately I had to. She disappeared and the police have charged her with assault. I kept a poker face and kept saying "I'm not arguing" ...my x is aghast at me for calling police and wants me to retract. I'm not. I guess in hindsight what I didn't do is give her enough warning before taking phone. Didn't want to call police but she seems to loose control ...how can I alleviate this ...I tried to be clear ...I was VERY CALM COOL AND COLLECTED, which she didn't like.

.....

Things do seem to get worse before they get better. But you're on track. I can see you

are working the program. Thanks for being a good student.

Re: ... how can I alleviate this?

Please refer to the strategy entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [online version – session #3].

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:27AM (-07:00)

## Daughter Hates Father

Monday, October 06, 2008

Mark,

Things have been going great and my 14 year old daughter A\_\_\_ was even going to school on time and her overall behaviour was on the up until the school told me that in the past 3 weeks she has not been going, to cut a long story short she went to her dads this weekend < we are divorced and he has re married> And she told her dad to fuck off and walked out the house saying she does not have a dad anymore. All because they were having a chat about her not going to school and why. She has not been away having fun with friends but been staying in her room on her own.

My ex and his wife are both a great help and we all get on very well and all talk often about A\_\_\_.

This past week she has changed a lot, in the past if I ground her for the day, she puts up a fight but wont go over the door, this week she has gone out anyway and comes back when she pleases.

I have a very open relationship with her and always tell her and show her how much I love her. I feel in a way she seems to be lost and not sure were her place in the family is now with her dad remarried and I am engaged.

But then again I might be wrong. We have some very long chats and think we are getting somewhere and then she goes and does her own thing no matter how it can hurt anyone else or put anyone out.

A little about A\_\_\_.... until she went to high school she was a sweet little girl that all the teachers loved and said she was a pleasure to have in her class, but always chatty and outgoing. Would go out her way to help in anyway she could. She was always leaving me wee notes saying how much she loved me and would leave me her last sweet.

In second year at high school her dad and I went to parents night at the school and were shocked at what the teachers were saying about A\_\_\_ as at home and at her dads she was just the same girl. Then things seemed to get bad with her i.e. drinking swearing and her makeup was thick and started going out with boys. But I do believe she was only had kisses and cuddles. She has turned into a hard nut with a foul mouth and talks as common as she can.

She says she hates school ...hates her dad and hates her brothers ...her world is her friends and no one else matters and if they dare cross her she is not shy in letting them now, police teachers or her parents.

Yesterday at her dads was like another bad turn with her because if she was on her best behaviour it was always with her dad.

I'm sorry if im rambling but trying to set a picture for you in hope u have a magic wand and give me the answer to get her back on track and see she does well at school and does not have this hate for everyone.

L.

.....

Hi L.,

Re: school.

Please refer to the section of the eBook entitled "Read These Email From Exasperated Parents" [online version – session #4].

Re: I feel in a way she seems to be lost and not sure were her place in the family is now with her dad remarried and I am engaged.

Many studies have reported that children of divorced parents experience more problems in adjustment than children who grow up in intact families. Much of the research suggests that children of divorce are more likely to have more difficulties in school and to be more sexually active, more aggressive, more anxious, more withdrawn, less prosocial, more depressed, and more likely to abuse substances and participate in delinquent acts than their peers from intact families.

Despite many adjustment difficulties, adolescents show some positive changes such as an impressive development of maturity and moral growth, a more realistic understanding of finances, and a chance to experience new family roles and responsibilities.

Most children's adjustment problems occur within the first two years following their parent's divorce or remarriage. Research indicates that while behavior problems are common at the time of divorce, they typically diminish as time passes. Most children will eventually adapt successfully to this life transition and have no long-term ill effects.

Adolescent adjustment (absence of depression, low levels of deviant behaviors, and academic achievement) is influenced by many factors within the adolescents' primary residence. These factors include a feeling of closeness to the residential parent, effective parental monitoring, joint decision-making between the adolescent and parent regarding household rules and youth activities, and low parent-child conflict. Activities that reflect effective parenting include providing warmth and support, assisting with problems, providing encouragement, setting and explaining standards, monitoring, and enforcing discipline.

Also, cooperative, mutually supportive, low conflict co-parenting relationships are

advantageous for both children and adults. Other family process variables such as the maintenance of parent involvement, successful manipulation of the logistics of co-parenting (e.g., maintaining schedules, visitation, communication, decision-making), and the coordination of parenting roles and values are important mechanisms for reducing the stress of both parents and children.

Recommendations—

- Attempt to keep the changes that you can control in your adolescent's life to a minimum.
- Be aware of your adjustment or becoming depressed. Seek help from professionals if you need it.
- Continue to be a parent to your child rather than turning into a friend.
- Maintain a feeling of closeness with your teen, use effective parental monitoring, allow them to make decisions with you regarding their activities—aim for low parent-child conflict, and strive for organization and predictable routines in your household.
- Reduce inter-parental conflict. If possible, cooperatively parent with your child's other parent. Speak positively about your child's other parent in front of the child and do not place the child in the middle. For example, having your child spy on the other parent or using visitation rights as a bargaining tool undermines the confidence your child has with the other parent and strains his or her emotional well-being.
- Refrain from burdening your adolescent with your problems or using your teen as a confidant. Allow your adolescent to remain a teenager.
- The father needs to participate in important activities like forming morals, helping to solve problems, enforcing consistent discipline, and reinforcing appropriate behavior.
- Use effective parenting by providing encouragement and emotional support, establishing and explaining standards for conduct, and administering consistent discipline.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:44AM (-07:00)

**I just have this calming feeling that we are going to be ok...**

**Wednesday, October 08, 2008**

Good morning Mark;

Just started reading your Ebook and WOW, even if my daughter who is 14 is not as bad as some, just dealing with small issues compared to some, I just have this calming feeling that we are going to be ok and I started the techniques from Assignment 1 and already can see a look of astonishment on my daughters face.



So on that note - Thank you and I am looking forward to what else the program has to offer.

Thanks Mark, everything you state just in the first 30 odd pages hit the nail on the head!

Have a wonderful day - because my daughter and I will try too!

J.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:09AM (-07:00)

## He threw me against the wall and then threatened to kill me in my s...

Wednesday, October 08, 2008

Hi V.,

==> I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi Mark,

The new rules worked for a couple of days. K didn't sleep after school, did his homework and showed it to me and got off the internet on time. This was nothing short of a miracle, and showed me yet again, how the program really changes behaviour.

Then he breached the internet limit time (I did give him a couple of reminders, so he did this on purpose). Consequence = lost internet access for 24 hrs. Then he wouldn't show me his homework - so his phone has been disabled for 24 hrs.

==> Oops! Not a good move. This is the beginning of a power struggle.

**Whenever a child introduces new problems on top of an existing one, parents should put the new problem in the "deal-with-it-later" file. Please review Q & A - On Discipline [under "The Art of Saying No" - Session #2 - online version of eBook].**

Anyway, I am sticking to the rules, and he tried all sorts of things to get me to change my mind (swearing, screaming, saying it was life or death if he couldn't access the internet - mind you, he couldn't explain why). I remained calm and explained he chose to breach the rules, therefore he chose the consequences.

In the end, he stood in my way and when I tried to go past him, he threw me against the wall and then threatened to kill me in my sleep. I calmly told him his bullying will not work, and that he has now lost the phone for 48 hrs for threatening me.

My question is this: do I go to the police to report him? Or do I warn him I will do that if he is violent again?

**==> Warn one time, then follow through with calling the police if it happens again. The cops can't do much, but you don't want to model for your son that it is O.K. to engage in domestic battery (which IS illegal).**

(He physically shoved me just when I started this program, and he had his phone taken.)

I don't want to give him attention for his bad behaviour, or look scared, like I need police protection.

**==> Good move!**

If the police start to get involved, he will get a caution I guess, but not much more given he is 15 yrs. He is likely to be scared initially but then his bravado might increase when he realises that they can't do much to him.

Is he more likely to give up this behaviour with consequences that I impose (clearly the phone disabling and internet being cut off is very painful for him), or by involving the law?

**==> Stick with your consequences (and use the deal-with-it-later file), but also involve authorities when your son becomes violent.**

I would appreciate your advice, and thank you for your support thus far, it has been invaluable in giving me the strength to keep going.

Vicky

**==> You're welcome.**

**Mark**

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:45AM (-07:00)

## Teacher Picking On Student?

Wednesday, October 08, 2008

Mark,

I am into the second week of the program and have made some progress with my son. However, he has a teacher that seems to have the ability to reverse in one 45 minute class period what took me 3 days to accomplish. It frustrates the hell out of me. About a month ago my son had a hernia repair operation and missed one week of school to recover. That seems to be where things started to break down. She failed to send his assignments like the other teachers did and gave him zeros on the assignments he missed. I have lodged several complaints with the school about this. In short, there seems to be constant tension between the two. She calls me almost daily complaining about misbehavior in her class and sends him to the principal's office. Here are some of the "offenses" he has committed that results in him getting put on detention. "He rolled his eyes at me." "He gave me a funny look." "He wouldn't answer a question when called on."

Mark, he has no problems with any of his other teachers and is doing quite well in his other classes. I believe he feels like he is getting picked on by her and singled out. I have asked the school to move him to another class. However, they so far have refused. I certainly don't want his problems in her class to affect his other classes and desperately am trying to find a solution. He is very upset about this class. Any suggestions?

Thanks,

R.

.....

If you think there may be a problem between this teacher and your son, here's a plan of action:

**Gather the facts—** Try to remain objective and open-minded. If there is a problem, don't immediately assume that it is entirely the teacher's fault; it could be a problem with your child or the school. If your school or teacher will allow it, sit in and observe what goes on in the classroom. If parent observation is not permitted, talk with other parents to see if their children are having problems. Also talk with parents whose child had this teacher in past years to determine if there is an ongoing problem.

**Document the problems—** Write down the times and dates of incidents of a teacher's inappropriate behavior. If other parents are noticing problems, ask them to do the same.

**Call or meet with the teacher—** Schedule a face-to-face meeting if you feel a phone call won't resolve the problem.

**Approach the teacher as a professional and an ally—** Avoid a confrontational attitude and stick to the facts. Try to stay clear of personal criticism. Focus on classroom practices, curriculum and what you feel your child needs. Once you have had a conversation with the teacher, give him the opportunity and a fair amount of time to improve the situation.

**Follow the school's policy—** Your school should have a policy on teacher-parent disagreements. Ask what the policy is and follow it. Give this process time to work.

**Contact the principal—** If you don't see any progress after a few weeks, take your concerns to the principal. But be aware that it is always better if you can resolve the problem without involving the principal. Once you involve the principal, you cross a line, and your relationship and your child's relationship with the teacher will be forever changed.

**Contact the district superintendent—** If you still haven't resolved the problem after speaking with the principal, contact the district superintendent. Ask what the district's policy is on evaluating teachers and how teachers are assigned to schools in the district. Gather other parents with you who are concerned about the teacher. Realize that this process takes time and may not end in a quick solution, but there is hope if you are persistent in working with other parents and continue to voice your concerns.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:51AM (-07:00)

## College Student Needs To Learn How To Budget

Saturday, October 11, 2008

Hi mark

Y\_\_\_ at college...

She entitled to £30.p/week as student, which goes into her bank account although at present isn't yet receiving as late application. X gives her money every week I just give her on daily basis as required to get to college and lunch when she runs out. X gives more than required for college so she uses for going out, rubbish food, clothes (you name it). She has stolen quite substantial sums of money from myself and x without consistent consequences in the past, im quite observant and careful so have received it back if caught before spending but x isn't aware half the time and leaves money around for easy picking, she has been sacked or walked out on p/t jobs, and is determined not to work as she knows that she owes a lot of money to various folk. When she committed these mentioned acts I said she needs to pay us all back.

On assignment 1 put into place chores, so should I start paying for these? But she has been reasonably good, as I comment on her helpful acts, but admittedly, not always. Not sure how to go about grant money. Because she abuses money and uses for her needs.... has not learnt self-reliance.

K.

.....  
You will want to follow the recommendations in "The Art of Saying Yes" and in "The Art of Saying No".

Bottom line: This is a golden opportunity for your daughter to learn how to budget. The basics of budgeting are the same for students as they are for anybody else: list the sources of income, such as savings from summer jobs, financial support from parents, financial aid from the school, scholarships, and income from a job. Then list expenses, such as tuition, books, groceries, gas, entertainment, etc., in as much detail as possible. Make a budget worksheet.

If expenses are less than income, she's in good shape as long as she sticks to a spending plan. If expenses are MORE than income, she needs to find ways to cut spending or increase your income.

Throwing money at her will NOT teach budgeting – and a college degree is no guarantee of an ability to manage money wisely. It takes effort and discipline, and the time to start is now. So keep this larger goal of "teaching her how to budget" in the back of your mind.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:12AM (-07:00)

# There are way too many out of control kids out here...

Saturday, October 11, 2008

Hello Mark,

I wrote to you a few weeks ago regarding my grandson that we had guardianship of. My grandson was in the hall since Sept. 18 and we went to court yesterday. His mother agreed to take him back to Los Angeles. The judge obviously did not read anything about his past history. He shocked us by telling the court audience that we "failed" Logan and terminated our guardianship. The judge reduced his 3 misdemeanors to 2; 21 days served in the hall is done and 6 months probation and his case is being transferred to Riverside County and said that Logan is now their problem. I guarantee that Logan and his mother will have a big argument within one week or sooner, because he has not learned a thing except to bully adults.

What I've seen the public defenders do is plea bargain serious offenses (felonies) down to misdemeanors so the kids do not have to spend time in the hall due to overcrowding. There is no offer of classes like you have or counseling for either parents or children. The deputies do not like dealing with juvenile probation; public defenders do not like dealing with parents and keep us in the dark and the kids get to make their own decisions regarding their pleas.

My question to you is--what is the recidivism of children returning to the system after the parents have taken your course at Superior Court? Are the parents required to take your course when the child first gets in trouble? Is your program in other states juvenile systems?

Our biggest problems here in central California is drugs and gangs. A 12 year old boy just shot and killed his 76 year old grandmother. He was probably expelled from school because he had "problems" in school and was being home schooled by grandma. They got into an altercation and he shot her. If there could be an intervention when teachers see the ODD behavior, parents could take your course early enough to turn the kid around. Logan has been acting out since kindergarten. By 6th grade, his teacher wanted to kick him out of class, so I took him to the doctor and he was diagnosed with ADD and was put on Concerta which helped some. I don't agree now that kids need to be put on drugs to control behavior. It's too late for us and Logan?

There are way too many out of control kids out here. I really feel sorry for teachers, because they have to deal with a lot of students acting out. What can I do to get your message out there to wake up the authorities and parents about your program?

Thanks for listening.

M.

.....

Hi M.,

Re: My question to you is--what is the recidivism of children returning to the system after the parents have taken your course at Superior Court?

Most parents (90% +) are able to avoid involving their child in the system at all. Those who attend the live group – or join OPS – after their juvenile is already on probation greatly cut down on the length of time he/she is on probation. Plus the juvenile whose parent is using these strategies tends to violate probation much less than those in the control group.

Re: Are the parents required to take your course when the child first gets in trouble?

Some are court-ordered – most are not.

Re: Is your program in other states juvenile systems?

Only Indiana currently. But I hope to branch out as my Higher Power leads me to do so.

Re: It's too late for us and Logan?

It's never too late.

Re: What can I do to get your message out there to wake up the authorities and parents about your program?

Tell them to Google for [www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com](http://www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com) ...then they can see for themselves whether or not the program is of any value to them.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:52AM (-07:00)

## Signs of a Pot Head

Saturday, October 11, 2008



Mark-

I think my daughter still smokes a bit of pot, nothing like before, but she has been losing about 37 pounds in the last month, suffering anxiety attacks, back pain, etc. What should I be looking for?

.....

Marijuana is usually smoked using cigarette rolling papers, a purchased water bong, or a makeshift bong that can be made from a variety of items. Hash can be smoked or eaten, and is sometimes cooked into baked goods.

What to look for:

- Bloodshot eyes
- Cigarette rolling papers
- Dilated (large) pupils
- Pipes, bong, homemade smoking devices (you may see sticky residue from burned marijuana)
- Reduced motivation
- Seeds that have been cleaned from marijuana
- Sleepy appearance
- Smell on clothing, in room, or in car

Generally it can be difficult to recognize marijuana use if you don't see your child after smoking when she is still experiencing the effects of the drug.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:52AM (-07:00)

## Daughter's First Experiment With Drugs

Sunday, October 12, 2008



Mark-

I have a 16-year-old daughter whom I have always spoken honestly to about sex, drugs, and the dangers that exist in the outside world. I feel that I have always done as I should to be a responsible parent. Recently, she told me she and her friends tried pot. I explained that this was not acceptable but assured her that we understand that peer pressure can be a horrible thing. We again discussed ways to avoid drugs and reinforced our love and

devotion to her, but made it quite clear that this behavior is not in any way acceptable to us. To my surprise she started to cry.

I explained that I was thankful she was honest and glad that she felt she could talk to us. I knew she felt bad and told her there was no punishment because I knew she was feeling worse than she has in her life. I also explained that this is her first try and last - that punishment would be swift and stern if she ever thought of doing this again. My question is - what should my next move be, and how can I stop feeling as if I let her down in some way since she seemed to lack the will power to say No?

.....

A very straightforward way to help her is to restrict her interaction with peers who use drugs. Steer her towards an alternative group of peers who are more involved in activities that require sharpness and aptitude. Tell her that she can blame the restriction on you (this will help her save face with peers), but that she absolutely may not be out with drug

using friends.

It is not a moral failing that your daughter lacked the will power to say no. But it tells you that she may be at risk for addiction because she wanted to say no and couldn't. You will need to stay on this issue until you are sure that the two of you (or better yet, the whole family) have put enough structure in place for your 16-year-old to be safe.

It will take both of you (and maybe the whole family) to make a partnership so that she can say "no." Ask her how you can help her with his will power.

Let go of your guilt! It is healthy to feel guilt if you intentionally did something wrong, but it seems that you did the best you could at the time to prepare your daughter to refuse drugs. If you are busy soul-searching and self-blaming, you will miss a very important step, which is to continue developing your alliance with your daughter.

Make sure that adults supervise her whenever she goes out. This will require you to call the parents of her friends. It will give you a chance to network and to find other parents who are like-minded.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:25AM (-07:00)

## Temper Tantrums: Comprehensive Summary, Prevention & Intervention

Sunday, October 12, 2008

There are nine different types of temperaments in kids:

- Distractible temperament predisposes the youngster to pay more attention to his or her surroundings than to the caregiver.
- High intensity level temperament moves the youngster to yell, scream, or hit hard when feeling threatened.
- Hyperactive temperament predisposes the youngster to respond with fine- or gross-motor activity.
- Initial withdrawal temperament is found when kids get clingy, shy, and unresponsive in new situations and around unfamiliar people.
- Irregular temperament moves the youngster to escape the source of stress by needing to eat, drink, sleep, or use the bathroom at irregular times when he or she does not really have the need.
- Low sensory threshold temperament is evident when the youngster complains about tight clothes and people staring and refuses to be touched by others.
- Negative mood temperament is found when kids appear lethargic, sad, and lack the



energy to perform a task.

- Negative persistent temperament is seen when the youngster seems stuck in his or her whining and complaining.
- Poor adaptability temperament shows itself when kids resist, shut down, and become passive-aggressive when asked to change activities.

Temper tantrums are:

- a normal part of learning independence and mastery
- a sign of frustration that a child can't do something comfortably
- a way a young child lets out strong emotions before he/she is able to express them in socially acceptable ways
- are most common among two and three-year-olds, which is probably why the phrase "terrible twos" was invented
- are not contagious, although the behavior of those around a tantrum can play into it
- occur in about 80% of children between the ages of 1 and 4
- disruptive or undesirable behavior or emotional outbursts displayed in response to unmet needs or desires, or an inability to control emotions stemming from frustration or difficulty expressing the particular need or desire
- generally begin around age 12-18 months, get worse between 2 and 3 years, then decrease rapidly until age 4, after which they should be seldom seen.
- most likely to occur when a child is afraid, overtired, or uncomfortable
- often a cry for help: your child is trying to get your attention
- can be an extremely constructive part of the development of a healthy child

Parents:

- can learn from their child by understanding the situation that caused the temper tantrum to erupt
- can learn how to nurture and discipline effectively
- may be tempted to be loud or angry, but tantrums are a time to be calm
- may need to hug their child who is crying, and say they will always love him or her no matter what, but that the behavior has to change
- may understand what a toddler says only 50 percent of the time
- need to understand that temper tantrums are a normal part of early child development
- often take the blame if their toddlers seem out of control
- should choose which situations call for limits and which can be overlooked
- should notify their child's physician if the tantrums increase in intensity, the child holds their breath or faints during tantrums, the child's behaviors are destructive, the child often hurts themselves or other people, the child displays signs of a mood disorder
- should try to catch their children doing something good and compliment them several times a day

Young children don't have evil plans to frustrate or embarrass their parents. All young children from time to time will whine, complain, resist, cling, argue, hit, shout, run, and defy their teachers and parents. Temper tantrums, although normal, can become upsetting to teachers and parents because they are embarrassing, challenging, and difficult to manage. When children's need for independence collides with the parents' and

teachers' needs for safety and conformity, the conditions are perfect for a power struggle and a temper tantrum.

#### Control—

They want independence and self-control to explore their environment. To give your child a sense of control, let him or her make appropriate choices. Give children control over little things whenever possible by giving choices. Try to intervene before the child is out of control.

#### Attention—

After your child quiets down, you might say, "I noticed your behavior, but that won't get my attention."

#### Prevention for Parents—

It is much easier to prevent temper tantrums than it is to manage them once they have erupted. Here are some tips for preventing temper tantrums and some things you can say:

- Avoid boredom. Say, "You have been working for a long time. Let's take a break and do something fun."
- Change environments, thus removing the youngster from the source of the temper tantrum. Say, "Let's go for a walk."
- Choose your battles. Teach kids how to make a request without a temper tantrum and then honor the request. Say, "Try asking for that toy nicely and I'll get it for you."
- Create a safe environment that kids can explore without getting into trouble. Childproof your home or classroom so kids can explore safely.
- Distract kids by redirection to another activity when they tantrum over something they should not do or cannot have. Say, "Let's read a book together."
- Do not ask kids to do something when they must do what you ask. Do not ask, "Would you like to eat now?" Say, "It's suppertime now."
- Establish routines and traditions that add structure. For teachers, start class with a sharing time and opportunity for interaction.
- Give kids control over little things whenever possible by giving choices. A little bit of power given to the youngster can stave off the big power struggles later. "Which do you want to do first, brush your teeth or put on your pajamas?"
- Increase your tolerance level. Are you available to meet the youngster's reasonable needs? Evaluate how many times you say, "No." Avoid fighting over minor things.

- Keep a sense of humor to divert the youngster's attention and surprise the youngster out of the tantrum.
- Keep off-limit objects out of sight and therefore out of mind. In an art activity keep the scissors out of reach if kids are not ready to use them safely.
- Make sure that kids are well rested and fed in situations in which a temper tantrum is a likely possibility. Say, "Supper is almost ready, here's a cracker for now."
- Provide pre-academic, behavioral, and social challenges that are at the youngster's developmental level so that the youngster does not become frustrated.
- Reward kids for positive attention rather than negative attention. During situations when they are prone to temper tantrums, catch them when they are being good and say such things as, "Nice job sharing with your friend."
- Signal kids before you reach the end of an activity so that they can get prepared for the transition. Say, "When the timer goes off 5 minutes from now it will be time to turn off the TV and go to bed."
- When visiting new places or unfamiliar people explain to the youngster beforehand what to expect. Say, "Stay with your assigned buddy in the museum."

#### Intervention for Parents—

There are a number of ways to handle a temper tantrum. Strategies include the following:

- Hold the youngster who is out of control and is going to hurt himself or herself or someone else. Let the youngster know that you will let him or her go as soon as he or she calms down. Reassure the youngster that everything will be all right, and help the youngster calm down. Parents may need to hug their youngster who is crying, and say they will always love him or her no matter what, but that the behavior has to change. This reassurance can be comforting for a youngster who may be afraid because he or she lost control.
- If the youngster has escalated the tantrum to the point where you are not able to intervene in the ways described above, then you may need to direct the youngster to time-out (see "Resources"). If you are in a public place, carry your youngster outside or to the car. Tell the youngster that you will go home unless he or she calms down. In school warn the youngster up to three times that it is necessary to calm down and give a reminder of the rule. If the youngster refuses to comply, then place him or her in time-out for no more than 1 minute for each year of age.
- Remain calm and do not argue with the youngster. Before you manage the youngster, you must manage your own behavior. Spanking or yelling at the youngster will make the tantrum worse.
- Talk with the youngster after the youngster has calmed down. When the youngster stops crying, talk about the frustration the youngster has experienced. Try to help solve the problem if possible. For the future, teach the youngster new skills to help avoid temper tantrums such as how to ask appropriately for help and how to signal a parent or

teacher that the he or she knows they need to go to “time away” to “stop, think, and make a plan.” Teach the youngster how to try a more successful way of interacting with a peer or sibling, how to express his or her feelings with words and recognize the feelings of others without hitting and screaming.

- Think before you act. Count to 10 and then think about the source of the youngster’s frustration, this youngster’s characteristic temperamental response to stress (hyperactivity, distractibility, moodiness), and the predictable steps in the escalation of the temper tantrum.
- Try to intervene before the youngster is out of control. Get down at the youngster’s eye level and say, “You are starting to get revved up, slow down.” Now you have several choices of intervention.
- You can ignore the tantrum if it is being thrown to get your attention. Once the youngster calms down, give the attention that is desired.
- You can place the youngster in time away. Time away is a quiet place where the youngster goes to calm down, think about what he or she needs to do, and, with your help, make a plan to change the behavior.
- You can positively distract the youngster by getting the youngster focused on something else that is an acceptable activity. For example, you might remove the unsafe item and replace with an age-appropriate toy.

#### Post-Tantrum Management—

- Do not reward the youngster after a tantrum for calming down. Some kids will learn that a temper tantrum is a good way to get a treat later.
- Explain to the youngster that there are better ways to get what he or she wants.
- Never let the temper tantrum interfere with your otherwise positive relationship with the youngster.
- Never, under any circumstances, give in to a tantrum. That response will only increase the number and frequency of the tantrums.
- Teach the youngster that anger is a feeling that we all have and then teach her ways to express anger constructively.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:23AM (-07:00)

## Children & Sharing

Monday, October 13, 2008

I have a six-year-old very strong willed youngster. She can be so sweet... then she starts grabbing toys out kid’s hands, hitting and kicking. I have her on a chart, and she is doing better. However, she still has problems sharing and getting along with others.

.....

Perhaps one of the most common complaints that parents have about their young kids is that they find it difficult to get them to share.

Sharing is not something that is innate in a youngster and they will only learn it through your constant observation and guidance. Further more, there is a whole lot of concern about just what a youngster needs to learn how to share and when. Do they always need to share? You can help your youngster learn how to be more discerning with the sharing game if you just pay very close attention and follow some simple concepts.

**DON'T EVER FORCE YOUR YOUNGSTER TO SHARE.** The whole point of the exercise is lost if you have to force it. This means, don't threaten them in any way - like telling them they will have to go home, telling them they will miss out on a treat or you will punish them. Not sharing something is a whole different ball game than being willfully mean so the outcomes should also be different.

**OWNERSHIP COUNTS.** In the greater scheme of things, you have to remember that ownership does really count for something. After all, you don't go out in the world and give your cell phone, or car to a complete stranger simply because they ask. Try teaching your youngster that it is OK to refuse a request if someone asks for something that they have. This may apply to a bike or a special toy.

Of course, playground rules are a little different. If you are taking along a load of sand pit toys to the park then you may just have to try to explain to your child before you go that other kids are going to want to use them to and you will be sharing them with others. Perhaps you can help them pick out some toys that you will take along that other kids can use and something that they will use. Most importantly, involve them in the process. If, once you get to the park and it is obvious that your youngster is simply not up to the challenge of sharing their stuff, you don't have to turn around and come home.

There are things that you can do to help them along. A child doesn't have the ability to look at things as rationally as you. All they know is that someone else is trying to take away their stuff. In their mind they don't know if it will ever come back! Try saying something along the lines of, "We are going to share, which car can Johnny have? The red one or the blue one?" In this way, you are introducing the concept of sharing, THEY are making the decision (in a roundabout way) and you are doing it without aggression or force.

**IF IT'S GOING TO BE AN ISSUE - LEAVE IT AT HOME!** If you know that it is going to be an issue to share a special toy then try to leave it at home. Don't expect other kids not to want to play with it and don't expect your youngster to want to share it. Explain, as best as you can, that this is a toy for home. Trust me, other parents will appreciate it much more than you think. After all, how many times have you had to try and explain to a child why they can't have someone else's toy?

Above all, don't expect too much. Sharing is not something that comes naturally and it is not something that is always warranted. Maybe what we should be teaching our kids, is to respect the property of others, that they can't always have what they want and that it is OK to say no.

## Stepdaughter Hates Stepmother

Monday, October 13, 2008

Hello, before I waste anymore time I thought I'd cut straight to the point and just ask if you cover teens loving in split homes with step-parents.

My step-teen lives one week with her Dad and I, and one week with her mother (and boyfriend). Issues seem to come from the fact that she all of a sudden hates me, even though I've been around for 8 years and she's 15.

Do you cover anything like that because every book. Other therapist try to treat me like I'm a "parent" when she does not see me that way, so none of the tactics work. Just curious, as this teen is destroying my marriage and seems to be enjoying herself while she is doing it.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

B.

.....

Hi B.,

I can promise you that you will benefit from my program.

You are more of a mentor than a mother. You are an adult male in your stepdaughter's life, much like an aunt, a scout leader or a teacher, but you live under the same roof and sleep with her father. Being one family unit will require careful planning with your husband. Set rules and boundaries together, but try to disrupt the family karma as little as possible. Decisions about finances need to be made with your partner as well, and not in a vacuum.

One of the major roads to failure as a stepmother is to take on the role of disciplinarian. The teenager tends to resent this new gal with new rules who comes in to disrupt her family. Successful stepmothers and family relations experts suggest that bio-dad should continue his role as the dispenser of discipline when required to maintain some consistency with the children. Your job as stepmother is to support his role, to make sure he is treated with respect, and to show solidarity. If you disagree with something, discuss it in private and reach a common understanding with your husband so as not to undermine his role.

Don't take rebellion personally. The teenage years are the transition time from dependence as a child to independence as an adult. Rebellion in some form is to be expected from all teens, even in intact families. So don't get offended when your stepdaughter is rebellious; take it in stride and focus on the behavior exhibited. It is less likely to be focused at you than it is to be focused on their changing world.

If you are consistent, stay within your role, and show that you care about and love her and her dad, the barriers will eventually come down and a positive relationship will become the pattern.

All the above is easier said than done, but very possible none-the-less.

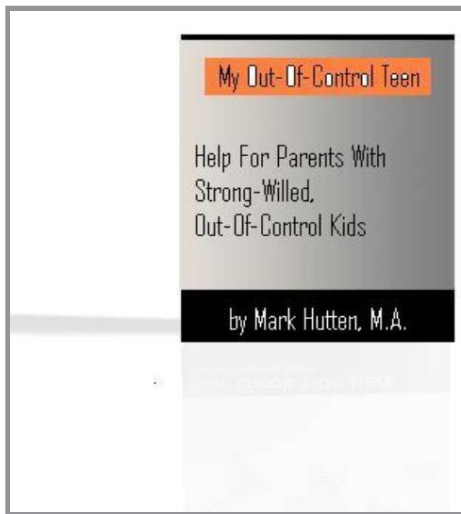
Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:37AM (-07:00)

## I bought this book to share with foster carers...

Tuesday, October 14, 2008



Dear Mark. I am a trainer for foster carers in Royal Kingston-Upon-Thames, UK. As a social worker, I have worked for years with families and foster families trying to manage their out of control teens. I bought this book to share with foster carers and I'll also purchase the CDs to lend out to foster carers.

Who knows --- I might still find some tips to use on my grown up children when they offend me!! I love my eldest grandson (16) to bits but he has ADHD and I know how my daughter struggles with his behaviour. This book could help her too.

Could you confirm that it is acceptable under your copyright for me to share with others?

Many thanks

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Re: Could you confirm that it is acceptable under your copyright for me to share with others?

Yes ...absolutely!

Good luck,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 03:47PM (-07:00)

# Teens & Moving to a New Country

Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Hi Mark,

I've just downloaded your book and have already begun to feel a better understanding of what's happening in our home.

In August we moved our family of 2 teenage girls (15 and 16) away from our home in Canada to Europe. Our 16 year old has taken to the move like a duck to water, but our 15 year old is really struggling. About 10 months ago she started hanging out with a bad crowd and 'fell in love' with a bad boy (school drop out, problems with the police, bad home situation). Her behaviour has gone downhill - swearing at me and disrespectful, school marks dropping drastically, dropping out of all her activities. We thought the move to Europe would be a chance for her to 're-set' and get back on a good path, but she is SO angry with me. She won't spend time with us, tells me she hates me and I'm stupid, and won't even look at my husband. Reading your book I recognize that my behaviour has contributed alot to getting her where she is (way too indulgent!).

I'm sure she is not doing well at her new school and that she thinks that if she fails we will send her back 'home' to live. She has this fantasy that we'll pay for her to live in an apartment with her friend. I'm trying to make her focus on building her life here and to stop looking back. What advice do you have to help us get her to move on?

Many thanks,

S.

.....

Hi S.,

Relocating to a new community may be one of the most stress-producing experiences a family faces. Frequent moves or even a single move can be especially hard on kids and teens. Studies show kids who move frequently are more likely to have problems at school. Moves are even more difficult if accompanied by other significant changes in the youngster's life, such as a death, divorce, loss of family income, or a need to change schools.

Moves interrupt friendships. To a new youngster at school, it may at first seem that everyone else has a best friend or is securely involved with a group of peers. The youngster must get used to a different schedule and curriculum, and may be ahead in certain subjects and behind in others. This situation may make the youngster stressed, anxious or bored.

Kids in kindergarten or first grade may be particularly vulnerable to a family move because developmentally they are just in the process of separating from their parents and adjusting to new authority figures and social relationships. The relocation can interfere with that normal process of separation by causing them to return to a more dependent relationship with their parents.



In general, the older the youngster, the more difficulty he or she will have with the move because of the increasing importance of the peer group. Pre-teens and teenagers may repeatedly protest the move, or ask to stay in their hometown with a friend's family. Some youngsters may not talk about their distress, so parents should be aware of the warning signs of depression, including changes in appetite, social withdrawal, a drop in grades, irritability, sleep disturbances or other dramatic changes in behavior or mood.

Kids who seem depressed by a move may be reacting more to the stress they are experiencing than to the relocation. Sometimes one parent may be against the move, and kids will sense and react to this parental discord.

To make the move easier on kids, parents may take these steps:

- After the move, get involved with the kids in activities of the local church or synagogue, PTA, scouts, YMCA, etc.
- Describe advantages of the new location that the youngster might appreciate such as a lake, mountain or an amusement park.
- Explain clearly to the kids why the move is necessary.
- Familiarize the kids as much as possible with the new area with maps, photographs or the daily newspaper.
- Help kids keep in touch with friends from the previous neighborhood through telephone, letters, e-mail, and personal visits.
- If a son or daughter is a senior in high school, consider the possibility of letting him or her stay with a trusted family until the school year is over.
- Let kids participate in designing or furnishing their room.

The more frequently a family moves - the more important is the need for internal stability. With the proper attention from parents, and professional help if necessary, relocating can be a positive growth experience for kids, leading to increased self-confidence and interpersonal skills.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 04:40PM (-07:00)

## I am planning to do some workshops for parents...

Thursday, October 16, 2008

Hi Mark,

I downloaded your course some time ago, to help me with my counselling work with teenagers.

There was one young lady of 15 years that I had been working with, who was the 'gang leader', drinking, spending the night with lads not coming home on time, driving her parents insane etc. etc, (actually there have been a few of these cases!) who is now behaving much, much better. The family are agreed that things are 90 percent better than before and the young lady decided that: "It don't get better than that!" She doesn't want to be too goody goody because that means she's 'boring' and 'uncool.' She's doing great, going to school (although reserves the right not to work hard if she doesn't want to!) and coming in at a reasonable hour. No more gangs and much less drinking.

Your course was extremely helpful Mark. I had been working with the same sort of strategies as you, but your course helped a lot because it is so well structured. I am planning to do some workshops for parents in the New Year, and looking forward to helping a lot more families.

Is it ok to use the handouts from your course? (e.g, Indulgence Quotient)

Warm Regards

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Re: *Is it ok to use the handouts from your course?*

Sure... I wish you tremendous success with your workshops!!!

Mark :)

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:37AM (-07:00)

## Daughter Needs Attention

Monday, October 20, 2008

I have an 8-year-old daughter who said that she needs attention. She is the only child and I think she is getting 110%. How can I positively help her?

.....

It's normal for kids to need attention and approval. However, attention-seeking becomes a problem when it happens all the time. Even charming attention-seeking can become controlling. Many kids make tragedies out of trivial concerns to get your sympathy. Excessive attention-seeking results in a situation where your youngster commands your life.

Many kids misbehave to get attention. The most notorious reason for misbehavior in young kids, this can be the seed for discipline problems in later childhood and

adolescence.

Your goal is not to eliminate your youngster's need for attention and approval. When handled correctly, your youngster's need for attention can be a helpful tool for improving your youngster's behavior. Eliminate not the need for attention, but those attention-seeking behaviors that are excessive or unacceptable. A mother who says, "Sarah, I know that you want me to stay and paint with you. I am busy now. If you can be patient and paint by yourself for ten minutes, I'll be able to spend some time with you then," is giving Sarah an opportunity to have the attention that she wants and needs. She is not giving in to nagging.

#### How Much Attention Is Too Much?

That depends on you. How much attention-seeking can you tolerate? The rule is that kids will seek as much attention as you give them. You must strike a balance between how much your kids want and how much you can give. Even normal attention-seeking can drive you crazy on some days.

Do not let your kid's need for attention turn into demands for attention. When kids do not get enough attention, they resort to outbursts, tantrums, nagging, teasing, and other annoying behaviors. They think, "If I can't get attention by being good, then I'll misbehave to get Mom's attention."

#### Three Kinds of Attention—

Adult attention and approval are among the strongest rewards for kids. Unfortunately, moms & dads seldom use attention wisely. There are three kinds of attention:

- Positive Attention
- Negative Attention
- No Attention

When you give your kids attention and approval for being well behaved, they are getting positive attention. Positive attention means catching kids being good. Focus on positive behavior. Positive attention can be words of praise or encouragement, closeness, hugs, or a pat on the back. A pleasant note in your youngster's lunch box works well. Positive attention increases good behavior.

When you give your youngster attention for misbehavior, you are giving negative attention. Negative attention typically begins when you become upset. You follow with threats, interrogation, and lectures. Negative attention is not a punishment; it is a reward. Negative attention does not punish misbehavior, but increases it.

What is the easiest way to capture your attention-sitting quietly or misbehaving? When kids do not receive attention in a positive way, they will get your attention any way they can. Do not pay attention to misbehavior. Pay attention to good behavior.

Avoid this scenario:

James and David are sitting quietly and watching Saturday-morning cartoons for thirty minutes. Everything is peaceful. Father is working on the computer. Suddenly, an argument erupts: "It's my turn to pick a show." Father charges into the room. He turns off

the television, scolds the two kids, and sends them to their rooms.

For thirty minutes, these kids were well behaved. Father said nothing to them about how well they were doing. Nothing was said about how quiet they were. Nothing was said about how well they were cooperating. The moment there was trouble, Father was instantly mobilized. Father did not give them any positive attention while they were being good. When they began misbehaving, Father rushed in with plenty of negative attention.

Negative attention teaches kids how to manipulate and get their way. They learn to be troublesome. They learn how to interrupt you. They learn how to control you. Negative attention teaches kids how to tease, nag, and annoy. It teaches kids to aggravate, irritate, and exasperate. We teach this by not paying attention to our kids when they are behaving appropriately, and by paying attention to them when they are misbehaving.

I have worked with hundreds of moms & dads who have taught their kids to be negative attention seekers. I have never met a parent who taught this deliberately. When you attend to the negative and ignore the positive, you teach your kids to behave in a negative way. Your youngster will misbehave to get your attention in the future.

Do not wait for misbehavior to happen. Do not take good behavior for granted. We do this with teenagers. We come to expect good behavior, and overlook their efforts. When a youngster demonstrates good behavior, notice it. Look for it. The more you notice, the more you will find. You will get more good behavior in the future. Anyone can catch kids being bad. Turn this around. Catch them being good. It's not easy. It takes practice.

Statistics show that the average American parent spends seven minutes a week with each of their kids. Do better than average. Telling your kids that you love them is not enough. Show them that you love them. Spend ten minutes of quality time with each youngster every day. No excuses, like I was just too busy today, or I didn't have time. We are all too busy.

In many families, both moms & dads work. Some moms & dads work two jobs. Your most important job is being a parent. When you come home after work, give the first thirty minutes to your kids. Do not be the moms & dads whose only hour with their daughter this week was in the principal's office or at the police station. Write your kids into your plan book. Make an appointment with each of your kids every day. Go for a walk and listen to what is happening in their lives. Turn off the TV for an hour and talk.

How to Ignore—

When you ignore misbehavior, you are giving no attention. Because attention is rewarding to kids, withholding attention can be an effective punishment. Withholding attention can weaken a misbehavior. When your youngster misbehaves to get your attention, ignore the misbehavior. Ignore your youngster's inappropriate demands for attention. You will weaken those demands and extinguish the misbehavior.

Some moms & dads find this hard to believe; they think that if a youngster is misbehaving, he must be punished. This is not true. Ignoring demands for attention is the best cure. When you ignore consistently, you will teach your youngster that misbehavior is not paid off with attention. Temper tantrums need an audience. Take the audience away, and there is no point to having a tantrum. Do not forget to redirect. Teach kids appropriate ways to get attention. "My ears do not listen to whining. Please ask in a soft

voice."

When to Ignore—

Ignoring does not mean ignoring the problem. It means ignoring demands for negative attention. There are many misbehaviors that you should not ignore. Some misbehavior should be punished. Deciding when to ignore or when to punish is not easy, and there are no exact rules. It takes timing and judgment. When your youngster misbehaves to get attention, ignore it. If your youngster does not stop in two or three minutes, give him a reminder. Tell your youngster, "I do not respond to whining. When you stop, we'll talk." Wait another minute or two. If he still does not stop, then tell your youngster to stop or he will be punished: "Stop now, or you will go to time-out."

If you get angry or let your youngster push your buttons, you lose. If you must use a punishment, dispense the punishment without anger. If you get angry, then your youngster has succeeded in getting the negative attention that he was after. If you feel yourself getting angry, walk away. Cool off. If you give in, you will be providing your youngster with an attention payoff. You will be rewarding a misbehavior.

Do not take good behavior for granted: give your kids positive attention when they are behaving. Ignore demands for attention such as teasing and whining; giving in to these demands encourages kids to misbehave to get attention. Understanding these ideas is easy, but practicing them is difficult. You are worth it. Make the commitment. Your kids are worth it, too.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:22AM (-07:00)

## Re: Sibling Rivalry

Friday, October 24, 2008

Hi Mark - we have finished the course and I must say a BIG thank you! It is working....doesn't always go smoothly but has been really helpful for us and I am very grateful. Now I have another issue that doesn't seem to really be addressed within your course.

I have two boys - 16 (Junior) and 13 (8th grade). They are at each other constantly - picking verbally away until it escalates into an argument with shouting and yelling. The younger one knows how to goad the older one. Of course, they each think we take the others side and treat them differently.

Here is my question.....I'm upstairs - they are downstairs - I hear the argument beginning and by the time I get downstairs they are yelling at each other and shoving (of course the other one started it and swore or pushed me or something - and of course they both deny it ). I didn't hear nor see what just happened and I don't know who is telling the truth. If I say "just stop fighting and one of you go upstairs and one go downstairs," I am accused of not punishing one for hitting or swearing - "I always get punished and he never does" ...etc.....even though I didn't see it or hear it. Sometimes my 16 year old will go into a verbal rage because I don't give the younger one consequences. It totally raises my blood pressure and I am caught in the middle. What is my course of action? HUGE THANKS!!

.....  
Hi T.,

What you're referring to is sibling rivalry (which is covered in the audio portion of the online eBook).

"Ignoring" behavior is an over-rated parenting strategy – but when it comes to sibling rivalry – it is often the best strategy. Here's a two-part plan:

1. Don't take sides. If you intervene in squabbling, it should never be on one side or the other. Never intervene on one side or the other unless there is possible harm. By harm I mean the possibility of causing injury, not minor pain. Say, "The two of you stop it" ...rather than, "Michael, stop hitting your brother" (which sounds like you're taking sides).
2. Never listen to what went on. And I mean never. Again, the only exception is if there is potential harm to one or the other child.

When rivalry is present, here are the four common issues that kids are really fighting about:

1. Expressing competition. We live in a competitive society and sibling rivalry is an extension of that. It's a way for kids to compete with each other and learn how to manage their own competitive behavior.
2. Getting a parent's attention. This is the most common issue that spurs sibling fighting.
3. Jealousy. One sibling may be jealous of the other (what the other one has, how the other one looks, or how well the other one does in school).
4. Teasing. Sibling fighting may take the form of teasing. By doing this, they test the limits of what's socially acceptable. In the family, kids can test what they can say by judging what kind of pain it causes. Though children may learn important lessons about how to interact with other people, there are other ways to learn that are less hurtful.

Here's a list of helpful tips that parents can use to reduce or stop sibling rivalry:

- Avoid favoritism. Some researchers believe that perceived favoritism is the greatest cause of sibling rivalry. So avoiding it helps immensely. This can be challenging since parents may favor certain traits in teenagers over other traits. That means teenagers who have the favored traits become favored.

Hint #1: Pay attention to each child and determine what kind of attention is needed. Consider that teenagers are different and need different things at different times. An exact minute for minute accounting of your attention is not essential. Sometimes a child may require some extra time.

Hint #2: Give each child his or her own special time with you. During this time, make sure no one else is around to compete for your attention.

- Don't take sides, don't be the judge. When they're fighting, tell the kids, "I want you two to work this out," and walk away. Don't get involved in the fight.

- Don't pay attention to the fight; stay out of it. If they are fighting for your attention and you don't get involved, they will learn other, hopefully better ways to get your attention.
- Know when to intervene. Sibling rivalry can develop into abuse if one sibling regularly victimizes the other. If you follow all of the above, this probably will not happen. But if you're still struggling with this situation, be alert. Check to see if someone is really getting hurt and who's too helpless to stop the abuser. The abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual. If it's going on, your response must be prompt and significant. This must not be allowed. If you can't stop the abuser yourself, seek outside help—a counselor, a friend of family member, or the police or other authorities if you can't stop it any other way.
- Make clear that ongoing conflict is unacceptable. When the fighting has stopped, say something to the rivals like, "I'm unhappy with the present level of fighting and I want you two to find a way to work this out." If a fight is just beginning, you may give the rivals a group goal so they can work together for a positive outcome.
- Offer problem-solving strategies when the teenagers are not fighting. It may be necessary to work with each child individually, but be really careful that you are not inadvertently playing into the rivalry by giving the desired attention. Offer support without saying whether the child is right or wrong. Ask what the child thinks the fight was about and how he or she might avoid this kind of fight in the future.
- Remain positive. By finding something positive about each of your teenagers on an ongoing basis, you'll reduce the level of sibling rivalry.
- Teach empathy. Empathy is the opposite of sibling rivalry. The more sensitive siblings are to each other's emotions, the less they'll challenge each other as rivals.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:03AM (-07:00)

## Home-School an ODD Teen?

Sunday, October 26, 2008



Mark-

Thank you for such a great website. It really helps to have this support. I started applying your advice 3 days ago as I believe my son has ODD, and yes, it did get worse at first... I went through two days of hell while my 13 year old son punched, insulted and swore at me and his younger brother continuously- (his older sister keeps out of his way). I kept calm and did not show my anger and today he woke up in a good mood ...the first time in a many months. He was much calmer and only has had one outburst.

So I am continuing with the program and I know I have along way to go. He has been home from school for 3 weeks as he got beaten up by boys from his previous school and now says he hates school so I am trying to work with school, doctor and education

authorities to get him back. (I live in England and the system is different here).

He is very bright but hates the school environment. I am a part-time college teacher myself and would like your opinion about whether I should let him home school which is what he wants or encourage him to return to school. I can see he really hates it but it is difficult for me to decide as I really enjoyed school as a child.

Thank you again so much... having the video clips is wonderful as being a single parent I have no one to discuss these problems with- what you say makes me laugh as it seems you are describing my child!

R.

.....

Hi R.,

It has been my experience that ODD children do poorly in regular school. I always recommend that they either home-school or attend an alternative school (alternative schooling being the better choice of the two).

In the event you would want to consider home-schooling, here are some ideas to get you started:

- A driving home-schooled adolescent can help take older family members to doctor appointments, grocery, etc.
- A family trip to learn History and Geography by seeing the country would be great fun full of valuable learning opportunities.
- A home-schooled adolescent can drive siblings to events while parents get other things accomplished (such as planning more difficult high school lessons).
- Doing a home improvement project as a family could increase home value while math, art and design skills, etc. are learned in a natural way.
- Grandparents can help teach valuable lessons while spending special time with their home-schooling grandkids.
- Home-schooling also allows one to know their child better.
- Home-schooling families can take vacations in off-season months which saves money and avoids crowds.
- Hours of practice can be dedicated to a special talent (spelling bee champs are often home-schoolers).
- If the home-school teacher is out of shape, doing "P.E." together can be fun and healthy. Joining a local health club, pool, or walking club would add to the choices.
- If the home-school teacher loved art, for instance, visits to museums and taking community or college classes together could be great fun.



- In a family emergency, home-schooled students can travel or spend time helping out.
- Most home-schoolers get along well with their parents and trust their advice.
- Spending some time on a volunteer project could mean learning across the curriculum while changing the community in a wonderful way.
- Subjects that were missed in high school can be learned with the student.
- There are opportunities for high school aged adolescents to do internships or get a part time job. This can be a huge advantage later when needing to list experiences on job and college applications. Also, home-schoolers can work hours other kids can't.
- Today's DVDs and computer programs make learning fun for all ages.
- When students grow up as home-schooling friends and attend special functions together, all the parents and kids can get to know each other well. Home-schooled students tend to socialize well with kids of all ages and with parents too. This makes for safe and fun gatherings and outings in the important high school years.

Home-schooling families who learn to balance education and life to achieve a happy and healthy home are more likely to enjoy a home education lifestyle. Here are some ways to live daily life while home-schooling:

- Teens can help sell items on online auctions. Home-schoolers can learn life skills, math, language arts, and more as they help with family income.
- Add a garden journal where plant growth is tracked and math, handwriting, and language arts are covered naturally, as well as creating a good reference for the next year.
- Animals are instant learning opportunities.
- By refurbishing an old car, the family gets a classic vehicle and adolescents learn skills in 'auto shop.'
- Choose the best books and music, avoiding junk books and "mind candy."
- Computer games are always useful.
- Cooking, sewing, housework, and grocery shopping teach children life skills across the curriculum.
- Dealing with the inevitable bugs and watching growth teaches science.
- Encourage children to be discerning in building their own libraries.
- Find deals at used book-shops and yard sales.
- Games such as Yahtzee, Monopoly, and Blurt develop logic, math, and language arts skills.

- Gardening is important for providing food to some families.
- Older children can help in your work if you have a business.
- Plant flowers to pick (even if you only have room for one small pot).
- Saving up money for a good cause is also valuable.
- Saying "Hand me that pint of milk" teaches volume, for instance. Doubling recipes or measuring fabric help reach family goals for food and décor or clothing.
- Adolescents can make shopping lists, figure a family budget, do laundry, clean, etc.
- There are endless charities, churches, and non-profit organizations that would love help from home-schoolers.
- Volunteering as a family teaches the children compassion and other character traits, math, art, and life skills while fulfilling family goals to serve others in the community.

Good luck in whatever you decide to do,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:30AM (-07:00)

## Re: Children Who Play With Fire

Monday, October 27, 2008

Mark-

Thank you so much for your program and your willingness to make this available to us via e-book. While I have just purchased your program and an only in Assignment 1, I feel that this is our answer to a growing problem with our child. My son is 12 years old. He has been a handful since birth. I realize now that I am a 100% passive parent. I have over-indulged him out of guilt for, as his mother, working outside of the home all his life. I have always felt this was a mistake and gave him stuff and freedom to compensate. As a result, my son is defiant, disrespectful and has been suspended twice from school so far this semester. I am so thankful that your help has come along before he gets any older.

I have one major concern to address immediately. My son has had a fascination with fire, fireworks, and blowing things up for about a year. I realize some of this is normal but now his interest has resulted in damage to our home. Four days ago, he damaged the front of our garage because he blew up action figures in the driveway. When I asked him why he did that & did he not realize he was causing damage, he told me he had to do it because he was angry at the school's asst principal. This was the same day he had been suspended for two days for disrespecting teachers. He said that doing this made him feel better. I told him that he could not continue to do this. I had him wash and repair/paint the damage. He swore he would never burn again. Later that evening, we calmly discussed the possible outcomes of playing with fire..that this could be life-threatening and we could

lose everything in a house fire. We even talked about fire safety and how we would exit our home in the event of a fire. He seemed to "get it".

You can imagine my surprise when the next day, I entered my kitchen only to detect smoke coming from our upstairs bonus room. I ran upstairs and was shocked at the damage he had done to the carpet upstairs. There are multiple burns. I immediately went to find him as he had already left the scene. I asked him about it & he gave me a glazed look. I am unsure if it was shame, denial or what..I have found no evidence of drugs or cigarettes so I do not believe this was a smoking session gone bad. I asked him if he had a problem that made him want to burn things. He said that when he gets mad, he burns and he feels better. (He had gotten angry at me when I denied him fireworks of all things directly before the bonus room incident.) I was shattered. I felt that there might be something more than just misconduct, but rather a psychiatric problem. Now I am confused as to whether he just totally disregards our home because he resents me for over-indulgence..or if he may also have a medical problem.

I have discussed this with my family. It seems that we agree that we must rule in/out any medical problem with a psychiatric evaluation. My plan is to have this done immediately. I am beginning Assignment 1 with him as well as he still needs behavior modification, regardless of the outcome of the evaluation. I would truly respect your opinion as to whether you believe I am going in the right direction.

Thank you again for your information and help..moreover your desire to help desparate parents.

Sincerely,

K.

.....

Hi K.,

Many kids set fires out of curiosity. But some of the kids will learn that fire is a powerful tool to gain attention or enact revenge. Other kids believe that if their first fire doesn't get out of control, they can control it.

Most experts agree that the best way to understand a youngster's fire setting is by looking at the age of the youngster and the reason for the behavior. There are three categories of fire setting, and for each a different strategy is used to stop the behavior.

#### Curiosity Fire Setting

The youngster is usually between 3 and 10 years old and is almost always a boy. They prefer to spend time alone and may be hyperactive.

The youngster is curious and plays with fire to learn about it. Fires are usually set in a closet or under a bed. The youngster will usually panic if the fire gets out of control. Fires set can cause major damage or even death.

Treatment at this stage is fire safety education.

#### Problem Fire Setting

The youngster is usually between 5 and 12 years old and is almost always a boy. They may have a history of school and social problems. Recent changes in life or suffering from stress or injury are common.

The fire is usually random or ritualized and located in or around the home.

There is often no clear cut reason for fire setting. This could be used as a "Cry for Help."

They will continue in this behavior until stress is relieved or they are taught safer ways to cope. There is a very high chance of repeat fire setting.

Treatment at this stage involves professional counseling and fire safety education.

#### Delinquent Fire Setting

The youngster is usually between the ages of 10 and 18 years old. They can be both boys and girls and are almost always in a group.

The fire is usually at an outdoor location and could involve dumpsters, grass or other vandalism type fires.

The youngster tends sets the fires to impress their peers, out of boredom, or to be defiant.

Treatment at this stage involves professional counseling, restitution and fire safety education.

#### How Parents Can Help

Parents play an important role in helping prevent fires involving kids. Here are some ideas to help:

§ Make sure your kids are supervised at all times.

§ Discuss with your kids the good and bad uses of fire, the dangers of fire and how quickly it spreads.

§ Encourage your kids to tell you about any other kids playing with fire.

§ Keep all matches or lighters in a place that is not accessible to kids, such as a locked cabinet. If you smoke, keep lighters on your person or in your purse, not scattered around the house.

§ Keep Matches, lighters and other fire setting tools off limits to your kids by telling your kids to immediately bring you any matches or lighters that they find. Set consequences for kids if they are found with any fire setting tools.

§ Lock up all flammable chemicals, like gasoline, turpentine or lighter fluid.

§ Make your house fire safe by installing smoke detectors and sharing with your kids the responsibility of checking the detectors once a month.

§ Practice with your kids stop-drop-and roll and crawling low in the presence of smoke.

§ Teach your kids fire safety by planning fire escape routes from each room in the house and practicing fire drills at your house once a semester.

FAQs from other parents:

§ I have found my son playing with fire. If I burn my son's hand will they stop?

This is a myth, if you burn your son's hand they will just be scarred. You must address the real reason for his/her playing with fire before they will stop.

§ Is fire setting considered pyromania?

Pyromania is a mental disorder -- fire setting is not. It is a behavior which can have many reasons and which can be stopped.

§ Is it normal for kids to play with fire?

While curiosity about fire is common, fire play or fire setting is not normal and can be deadly.

§ Is this just a phase that that they will grow out of?

It is not just a phase and you must deal with it immediately or it will continue to happen.

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:02AM (-07:00)

## Re: Teens & Dinner

Monday, October 27, 2008

I have just read Mark Hutten's Parenting Out-of-Control Teens, Assignment #1 and we have a problem. Jordan (15) lives an hour from town with her ex-boyfriend & his family. The mother just bought Jordan a dress for the school formal. They want her there because, quote, "she's the daughter I never had" unquote. There are few rules and expectations there. I spoke to Jordan earlier tonight and she sounds like she has no intention of coming home. She never contacts us & when we contact her, she acts like there is no problem. I can do everything else needed in assignment #1, but what do we do about dinner?

.....

Getting your adolescent to sit down to a regular meal with the family might be a little like lassoing Jell-O, but a new study suggests bringing adolescents to the table has the power to help them resist drugs and alcohol, feel better about themselves and even get better grades.

Those are just some of the findings from Project EAT, a study of the eating habits and

health of 4,746 middle and high school students conducted at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health. "Family mealtime appears to have so many benefits," says Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, lead investigator of Project EAT and author of "I'm, Like, So Fat: Helping Your Adolescent Make Healthy Choices About Eating and Exercise in a Weight-Obsessed World" (Guilford Press, 2005). "It lets kids watch their parents be role models for healthy eating, gives them access to healthier food than they'd get at fast-food restaurants and is an opportunity for parents to connect with their children," Neumark-Sztainer says.

The challenge? Finding time to cook — and to sit down together. "Just remember that what matters is time together, not when you eat or whether it's a perfect home-cooked meal," says Sztainer. These ideas can help you spend more quality table time with your adolescent.

FAQs from other parents—

How do you get your kids to eat with you? My son would rather grab fast food with his friends or eat in his room in front of the computer.

First, be flexible. Your adolescent may not eat at home every night, but the two of you can talk about it. I would sit down and say, "I want to have us eat together more often. We need to figure out a way to do that." Try to come up with some solutions together. The fact is, adolescents like getting good food that's free. And in our research, we've found that they like eating with the family, especially if the atmosphere is pleasant. They may stay away from the table, though, if they're getting grilled about homework or chores or the string beans they're not eating.

Is there a way to serve food that's healthier than takeout and microwave meals but just as fast?

Yes. Look for healthy shortcuts. Some of my favorite healthy fast foods from the supermarket include rotisserie chicken, baby carrots, pre-sliced fruits and vegetables, fresh vegetables you can microwave right in the bag and frozen stir-fry vegetable mixes. A dinner of eggs, whole wheat toast and some cut-up vegetables can work in a pinch. If you can stay away from highly processed foods, you'll get less fat, less salt and usually fewer calories.

What are the options for families like ours that aren't all at home in the evening?

Breakfast will work if all or most of your family members are home at the same time in the morning. Or try brunch on the weekend. Also be flexible about the time you eat. In our household, we tend to eat later than standard dinnertime because everyone is busy earlier. And you can have a family meal even if some family members are absent. One parent at the table is great for kids, too.

We eat out a couple of nights a week because we take our kids to practices, rehearsals and meetings. Does eating in a restaurant count?

Yes. Eating out has its benefits — nobody has to cook or clean up, and everyone can order what they like. It also provides an opportunity to learn about how to deal with the challenges of eating out. Portions served in restaurants are huge, and the selections include many high-fat, high-calorie items. Parents can, without saying a word,

demonstrate how to get a healthy meal by making smart choices and eating reasonable portions when eating out.

Julie Kennedy, Psy.D.  
OPS Consultant

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:23AM (-07:00)

## Re: Parents Disagree About How To Parent

Monday, October 27, 2008

Mark-

We have a sixteen year old son that fits the criteria for ODD. We have two other sons fourteen and twelve that show no signs of this disorder. We have sought professional help on and off since he was two. The first I heard of this disorder was a year ago when I started researching on the internet for the problems we were having in parenting a child like this. The difference in how we want to parent our son has caused a major problem in our marriage. Dealing with a child with this disorder has to be about the hardest thing I have ever encountered. I am very willing to listen to a professional or follow a program such as your own because all I have read about this disorder as well as your program and advice from the last psychologist we went to points us in the same direction. We have improved our relationship with our son by using similar tactics like your program suggests, but unfortunately my husband has a hard time withholding privileges, setting up some solid rules, and following through with consequences when my son breaks the rules. We are barely talking to each other at this point. I am looking for some guidance to help me get my husband on board, and I believe that if we follow a program such as your own, we can be successful. I would appreciate any help you could give.

Thanks, C.

.....

Hi C.,

It's not surprising that parents have differing views on the best way to discipline their children. Working out those differences requires clarity and perspective.

Other matters can usually be resolved by compromise or agreeing on which parent will set the rules about particular issues. Even so, forming a united front on discipline is often more easily said than done. Here are some ideas that may help:

- Ask why the other parent wants to discipline in a particular way. Listen to their response without interrupting. Be respectful, caring, and patient.
- Ask yourself why you are opposed to your parenting partner's method. What are you afraid will happen?
- Be prepared for behavioral problems. Remember that many changes in children's behaviors are linked to their stage of normal development. It should come as no surprise

that your toddler becomes defiant or your preschooler has an occasional temper tantrum. Talk ahead of time about how each of you would handle these predictable situations. That way you'll have fewer conflicts when they occur.

- Don't be trapped by your past. That includes both your own childhood and the style of discipline you may have used in an earlier marriage. Look for ways to explore, with your spouse, your unquestioned assumptions about disciplining children. One good way to do that is to take a parenting class together. That does two things: It helps you realize how differently other people respond to the same situations you face as parents, and it gives you and your spouse a common base of information from which to develop your shared approaches to discipline.

- Don't let negative childhood experiences determine your decision making about discipline. Keep your focus on the positive aspects of your family life in childhood to bring to your current parenting practices. This approach will free you to replace discipline strategies that don't work for both parents because of beliefs based in families of origin with solution-focused practices that respect and continue the positive experiences of both parents' childhoods.

- Explore discipline options, balancing the pros and cons. Decide which responses are most constructive for your parenting goals.

- Find out how the other parent wants the child to behave in the future.

- Find out what the other parent is afraid will happen if he/she doesn't discipline their particular way.

- Negotiate a Plan in Calm Waters. Sit down with your spouse and try to agree on ways to discipline at a time when nothing is wrong. When you discuss things calmly, you're more likely to come up with a plan you can both stick to. This will allow you to talk about what's best for your child, and not "who's right."

- Present a Unified Front. Kids understand when their parents feel differently about disciplining, no matter what their age. Children will often get away with misbehaving simply by creating an argument between you and your spouse — and this not only lets them off the hook, it creates a problem between the parents. Make sure that your child sees both parents following the same guidelines, no matter what the scenario. Once your kids start receiving the same treatment from both parents, they'll stop using your disagreements as a way to avoid punishment.

- Put your childhood experiences in historical perspective. Gender roles, child safety issues, environmental factors, and cultural norms change dramatically across the generations. What worked for your family 'back in the day' may not transfer comfortably to your current family situation. What are the issues in modern family life that trigger a strong belief that the values and child-rearing practices from your childhood are important to uphold and continue in your own family?

- Recognize that strong beliefs about child rearing may have their basis in childhood family experiences. At the same time, know that your spouse's beliefs have the same powerful roots.

- Recognize What Your Arguments Do to Your Children. No child likes to see his or her



parents fight. When you argue about what to do with your kids, you create a troubling environment for them, which could have serious long-term effects. Fighting with your spouse shifts the focus away from your child — and how they can learn to stop misbehaving — and on to a "parent versus parent" situation.

- Remember the positive experiences from your childhood. Think about your everyday life rather than the major events. What was going on around you during those happy times? It's fun to share these memories with your family, so make them a part of your traditions and family life. What are the positive values and childhood experiences that you want to uphold and continue in your family?

- Have a conversation between parents about the ways childhood histories may be influencing the disagreement about discipline. Take a problem-solving approach to identify:

1. What is the specific child-rearing issue that is causing disagreement between parents?
2. What are the feelings and beliefs that each parent has about the issue that may be rooted in childhood family history?
3. What problem-solving alternatives can each of you commit to that will resolve the disagreement and unite both parents in adapting the beliefs and practices of your families of origin to your family life today?

Lastly, always bear in mind that a weaker parenting plan supported by both parents is much better than a stronger plan supported by only one parent.

I hope this helps,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:00AM (-07:00)

## Ex-husband Has No Rules

Tuesday, October 28, 2008

Mark-

I have read thru the 1st chapter and agree with your philosophies and have attempted to put them into practice with all 4 of my children, now ages 24, 22, 19 & 17, throughout their lives. The problem is with #4. She is acting out at home & school (smoking, drinking, lying, arguing, stealing, sex, using pot, refusing to follow any rules or limits, etc.) She minimizes these actions and says she is old enough to make her own decisions. She is 17 and a Sr. in high school. I did not have any major problems with the other kids. Her father & I are divorced and he is an extremely passive parent and does not support this philosophy of parenting. In fact, he actively "campaigns" against it. Bottom line, I have rules and he doesn't, I expect our children to earn their privileges, he does not and often gives them what they want simply because I will not. She has chosen to live with him at this time because I am too "controlling."

I would describe myself as 80% assertive parent. I BELIEVE and TRY to practice assertive parenting, but, being human, I sometimes get beaten down by her "high energy"

and her father's active campaign against this "mean mother." I cannot trust her to keep her word. She simply states what she thinks I want to hear and then does what she wants. She does not say what she means or how she feels.

A year ago, I was her #1 go to when she had a problem - any problem. I listened and made suggestions, but never told her what to do or how to feel. I am planning on attempting to initiate a conversation using the positive statements here. I will write them down and practice them until I am confident that I can say them without letting her interrupting and angry statements break down the communication (probably my biggest weakness)

My questions –

#1 what is the best way to deal with her father? He refuses to participate in parenting our children, so I have attempted it on my own, but when he is constantly undermining my authority, I feel no matter what I do, it is useless.

#2 I am going to have to try to rebuild our relationship "long distance" (her father only lives 3 miles away). Are there any modifications to assignment #1 that would pertain to this situation?

Thank you for your time.

P.

.....

Hi P.,

Re: What is the best way to deal with her father?

What child wouldn't want to be in a home where nothing is expected of them, no work or discipline, and they are completely cherished from the time they step foot in the house? Can't blame them for wanting it! I'd love it, too!!

The simplest approach is to talk with your daughter directly to emphasize the fact that she has 2 homes now with 2 separate sets of rules. You have no say over what happens at her Dad's, but you have every say on what happens within your home. Let her know that because you do require certain things of her, it's not because she is a work-horse or a slave, but because that's what we do in families, that what we do to get along with one another, and that is what we do to become responsible adults. And be very careful to leave Dad completely out of this conversation. He has no room to judge or criticize YOUR home, so set the example, and don't mention any of that to your daughter either.

She may not understand that bigger picture yet. That's okay! Hold it for her, and someday, when she has a real home of her own, she will.

Conflict between assertive and indulgent parents will not subside without effort from both parents. It's not so much about compromise as it is about learning from each other. Belief systems about parenting can remain intact while both parents learn new skills.

Re: Are there any modifications to assignment #1 that would pertain to this situation?

Not really. Just bear in mind that a weaker parenting plan supported by both parents is much better than a stronger plan supported by only one.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:31AM (-07:00)

## Daughter shoplifting, using drugs, having sex...!?

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

Dear Mark,

I have listened and reviewed your CD and book and have found them very helpful. My daughter seems to be doing better, but just yesterday my sister told me that she is doing things that I know nothing about when she's not home. Last year was a nightmare year for us with constant fighting, door slamming, tantrums, etc. This year she seemed to be settling down some, but what my sister told me concerns me greatly. Shoplifting, drug use, sex and God knows what else. My daughter is in ninth grade and is fourteen years old. I am very concerned with her choices. She is seeing a counselor one a month for what is diagnosed as anxiety disorder. Can you give me some help or advice? I am angry, disappointed, and ashamed. I don't quite know where to go from here.

D.,

.....

Hi D.,

First of all, it doesn't sound like you have hard evidence that what your sister said is true. Avoid believing everything you hear -- even from a trusted sister (she may not have all the facts either). I find that when I get reports from one individual regarding another individual, some of it is true -- some of it is not.

Re: shoplifting—

When you first get the call, write down where you need to go to get your daughter and the phone number of the facility. Many parents do not do this and try to figure it out after they have hung up the phone. Avoid this added stress by writing it all down.

Avoid confronting your daughter at the scene or facility. It just will not help and could go against both of you if charges are filed.

Find out who is in charge and treat this person with respect. Find out if charges are being filed. Write these things down; do not rely on your memory.

When you get home with your daughter, take a time out. You will both need it. There is nothing wrong with letting your daughter know that you are not prepared to discuss this with them yet.

Talk with your spouse about consequences. Try and do this a day or two later, so that you know you are over the shock and have calmed down.

Lay out the consequences in an Action Plan for your daughter.

Re: drug use—

Please refer to the page of the eBook entitled "Read These Emails From Exasperated Parents" [session #4 - online version].

Re: sex—

While adolescent sex may not be wholly preventable, the health risks it involves can be reduced through communication within the family. Research shows that frequent parent-child discussions about sex and its dangers may prevent adolescents from engaging in risky sexual behavior.

One message for those intimate parent-child conversations is that early sex is a threat, and it remains a greater threat to girls than to boys. Adolescent pregnancy occurs in about 750,000 girls each year. Compared with adults, a adolescent, with an immature cervix, is more likely to catch an STD, triggering problems like smoldering pelvic inflammatory disease that can silently take away fertility, tubal pregnancies, cervical and even throat cancer, and transmission of disease to offspring at birth. That doesn't mean boys are invulnerable; they just suffer fewer and milder consequences.

However much our daughters should take equality with men for granted, they must know that sex is distinctly sexist. An old saying goes that men give love to get sex while women have sex to get love. There's something there. The brains of adolescent boys are raging with the libido hormone testosterone, while girls have some increase in testosterone but at far lower levels. In contrast, girls have more oxytocin, the cuddle hormone, and seem to be more sensitive to it than boys. Also, teenage emotions are responding to basic instincts from the lower brain, which awakens the body to its generative capacities. Such impulses searching for instant gratification can easily overwhelm the higher frontal lobes—which impose thoughtful, rational, and conscience-driven restraints on behavior—because, by some quirk of nature, those distinctly human higher cognitive centers don't fully mature until the early 20s. Parents, like it or not, have no choice but to be their kids' frontal lobes for a time, and that's a source of vintage adolescent turbulence.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Daughter

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:22AM (-07:00)

## Son On Drugs

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

Hi Mark

Just an update on what is going on with my son C\_\_. C\_\_ is on drugs and a friend of his mother signed for a lease on a townhouse for him to move out. It is party central there.



C\_\_ phoned me at work the other day and told me that he is scared that he is not feel well at all. A lady he works with took him aside and told him she has a concern for his health that maybe he is diabetic. He is living on energy drinks 2 -3 at a time. He asked me to get him some food that he should be eating, and he would pay me for it. He works at a grocery store, but hey I thought it was a way to talk to him for a minute or 2. I told him I was going for grocery and I would be

away the rest of the weekend so I would bring over some groceries. I got to his townhouse, the one girl that lives there answered the door and looked at me funny, I know something was up. She went downstairs and got C\_\_ to come up and he was higher then a kite. I said are you stoned and he said what do you expect? I told him to take his groceries out and put them in the fridge and give me my shopping bag. I heard voices in the basement. I followed him to the kitchen and then I ran down the stairs. There is knowing in the rec room so I went to a door and opened it up and there in the fruit cellar was 7 of them smoking dope! I asked them if their mother knew they were doing this? Then I turned out and started yelling and screaming at the one kid that's mother took my son out of the rehab center and signed the lease for the townhouse. I was yelling and screaming at him that his mother had betrayed me when I was getting my son help. The kid said I wasn't doing anything here. After I finished yelling and screaming I left. C\_\_ was still in the kitchen putting the food away. He never came down to the basement when I was yelling and screaming at these kids. I have not contacted him since this happened on Friday night.

Today I received this email from him...

Subject: I'm Sorry

Honestly though mom I can't keep saying I'm sorry. It has been my choice to do the things that I have done... the only one I have to blame is myself. But do you really think that me being on my own and out of the house does me any good? Hmmm lets think about this one... How does a kid raised like I was get trapped in web with all the others who I looked down upon? I don't know how It happened mom I really don't, I've fucked up the past year and a half of my life I have nothing to show for it... I can't believe it has stretched this far. Sometimes I try to answer your e-mails, but it makes me feel to depressed I don't even know where to begin...

So for what its worth to you and dad I'm sorry.

Love

C\_\_ the fuck up

My reply:

It breaks our heart to see you in so much pain. C\_\_ you are not a fuck up at all.

Yes it was your choice to go down this path. We have been praying for you every day. It takes a big person to realise their mistakes. And an even bigger person to learn from their mistakes in life.

You are always welcome to come home, but we have rules that have to be followed. Only you can choice to turn your life around and you will need extra help and we are always here to help you, but it must be your choice and it is never to late.

If you are serious about getting help call us.

Take care of yourself.

Love Mom & Dad

Mark, am I being snowed here?

Please write back.

Thanks A.

.....

Hi A.,

Re: Mark, am I being snowed here?

I'm so glad you asked. I was getting worried there for a minute.

You already know the answer ...yes.

You were on the receiving end of an attempt by your son to garner your sympathy. Great strategy on his part. Once the parent becomes sympathetic, she begins to feel guilty ...then she begins to doubt herself and her decisions ...then she caves. Once the parent caves, the child is once again in the power seat (i.e., he gets to do what he wants -- with parental approval).

Here's the bottom line: Trust is gone. Your son will have to earn your trust back before you can trust him again. And the only way that is going to happen is for you to see at least one year of sobriety under his belt.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Son

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:40AM (-07:00)

## Re: Children Adjusting To Mom's New Parenting

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

Hi K.,

== > I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi Mark,

I love your program and have started using it on my 2 boys aged 5 and 8.

I have learnt that I am a severely overindulgent mother, a bit of a shock to the system.

I have started the poker face and staying extremely calm, a thing I use to do and yes back then my children were well behaved.

LOL

My 8 yr old son is a gifted child. I have problems with his inability to accept that others can't do things the way he can.

He constantly puts down his little brother, is rude to others, defiant and extremely competitive. I believe that this shows low self-esteem.

I have started the chores with lots of refusal, so he has lost the things he loves.

Yes things have got a lot worse, as you mentioned they could but now he is crying and all emotional when things go wrong, instead of blaming others and abusing people.

I wonder is this a new way of trying to get me to back off and change my mind???????

== > Partially ...mostly he's confused about your different parenting ...this is his way of adjusting.

Prior to this we had a huge outbreak of throwing and hitting things which isn't his usual way of dealing with things. Normally he would be extremely abusive and defiant. Amazingly enough I stayed calm and waited it out .... a combined time of over 6 hrs of hysteria in 2 days.

Quite proud of myself.

He is shocked that I am no longer arguing or repeating myself and the louder he gets the quieter my voice becomes.

My 5 yr old has got into a habit of bad language and hitting when things don't go his way, probably because his brother is very good verbally and that's his way of equaling things.

I started with the 24hrs of losing things, then went to 48hrs ...this was then started again because of hitting and kicking... so 5 days in all.

Is this 2 long for a 5yr old????

== > Close, but not quite. 7 days would be too long.

My 5yr old loves the thought of "I have EARNED something," he's very impressed by it.

Both my boys are extremely well behaved at kinder & school, it's just with ME.

== > Children don't mind showing their "ugly side" (as I call it) to the person they trust the most. This would be you. They can behave poorly in front of you because they are comfortable with you.

PS I have always been very involved in their lives and had always done what was in

week 1 activities.

I do play a lot with my children... Do you think taking my time (e.g., playing games) away from them when they haven't been respectful towards me is too tough a consequence ??? Doing this would upset them greatly.

== > It is a tough consequence – perhaps the toughest. But that's o.k. Playing games with mom is a privilege – not a right.

I would appreciate your thoughts about the emotional way my 8yr old is reacting and your thoughts on the time with my 5 yr old.

== > I think the best thing I need to say at this point is for you to slow down a bit. I want to do what is in your family's best interest. Thus, the best advice I can give you at this point - since you just got started with the program - is to simply work through the four-week sessions. Only do one session per week – nothing more! If we try to implement a bunch of new parenting changes too quickly, it will backfire.

I'm not trying to avoid answering questions. However, since most of the problems you talked about in your email will be addressed directly in the eBook (mostly in the Online Version), and since the program is designed to take baby-steps toward change, I would encourage you to resist your impulse to leap through the program in search of the "magic bullet." Instead, enjoy the process of working through each session – one session at a time. The results you so desperately desire will come independent of your striving for them. Patience is "key" right now.

Rest assured, you WILL get the answers you need to be successful with this program, but when the timing is right. I would like to save you from rushing into things, and then failing. Is this O.K.?

Your oldest son is 8-years-old. It has taken 8 years for the problems to get to this point. So it is going to take at least a few weeks to get the problems reversed.

We must implement change gradually because change is tough. People don't like change, and kids will totally reject parenting changes if they occur too fast. (This isn't to say that you won't notice any improvements in your child's behavior fairly quickly though.)

As you work through the program, email me as needed for clarification about the strategies outlined in the eBook. Then after the four-week program - after you have digested most of the material - email me again with a specific question regarding any parent-child difficulty you may still be struggling with.

Thank you for being patient with the process. The reward will be well worth the effort.

Mark

P.S. Be sure to watch ALL the Instructional Videos [online version of the eBook].

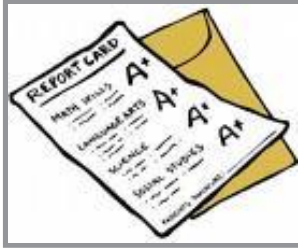
Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:22AM (-07:00)



# Should Parents Reward Good Grades?

Thursday, October 30, 2008



Mark:

I am in Week 2 and I am already seeing improvements in my daughter! We have a long way to go, but she didn't get this out of control overnight. So I have a question ...my daughter just came home with 100% + bonus points on a Social Studies test that she normally wouldn't have studied for and would have probably gotten a C or D. Molly is almost 14 and in 8th grade. She calls to tell me the good news and then asks me what her reward will be. I was not sure how to answer that. I told her she should just be happy with her performance (which she is), but she still keeps pushing for a reward. Should I give her something? She proposed we eat out at her favorite restaurant. I didn't want to make the reward food, since she is overweight already.

You advice is appreciated.

Thanks!

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Typically we neither reward good grades nor punish bad grades.

Why? Because a built-in reward/consequence system is already in place.

The "reward" (after receiving a good grade) is the satisfaction a child feels by being successful ...the consequence (after receiving a bad grade) is the disappointment a child feels by doing poorly. Even though they may not admit it, all children feel a sense of disappointment when they receive a bad grade -- although they talk themselves into believing that the 'D' or 'F' is no big deal.

Another reason we don't reward good grades is because the parent's "reward" is usually a poor reinforcer. For example, if you said, "I'll take you out to eat if you get 100% + bonus points on your Social Studies test" ...do you think she would work hard to get the grade? I don't think so.

You DO want to reward her, but with acknowledgment and praise -- not with over-indulgence.

When can you use "eating out" as a reward? She can earn the money to buy her own meal by doing extra chores.

Having said all this, if she brings home a great report card (e.g., all 'A's and 'B's), then it's O.K. to "pull a surprise" (i.e., you can take her out to eat -- but with no reference to the grades).

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:24AM (-07:00)

## Physically Abusive Daughter

Sunday, November 02, 2008



Hello Mark,

What do I do when my daughter hurts me? When she does not like what I say she punches, has gone after me with scissors, pens and whipped me with coat hangers and throws things at me.

How do you handle this? Help

.....

Hi T.,

Although aggressive behavior such as hitting, screaming, and even biting is not seen as all that unusual from a youngster of one or two years of age, the same conduct in kids merely a year or two older is often seen as cruel and problematic. Controlling feelings and emotions is, however, a learned skill and can be very difficult to master (even for some adults!).

Staying calm and collected not only requires a fair amount of self-control and discipline, but also a basic understanding of appropriate social behavior and morality. Most kids under the age of five or six have a minimal comprehension of what exactly is socially acceptable, at least beyond pleasing Mom or Dad. Even then, some kids may find it difficult to control their temper and yet there is often a difference between a youngster who is deceptively 'acting out' (which is rare, and often due to an unstable or unsafe home environment) and one who is simply trying to be assertive.

The majority of kids do not recognize their own strength or even the full consequences of their actions; and in a world where they are often being told what to do, where to go and how to behave, it does not seem all that unreasonable that they may sometimes need to speak out and be heard. Those school-aged kids who continue to act obnoxiously or aggressively may have never experienced the opportunity of being truly listened to in a loving environment. Listening, on the part of moms & dads involves not only hearing your kid's jokes and laughter, but perhaps more importantly hearing about those hurt, angered and unhappy emotions as well. So often, kids are not allowed to speak negatively, complain, or offer a difference of opinion and thus their feelings continue to build up until one day they may unintentionally vent or lash out. It is important to remember that hearing your kids out does not mean submitting to their every whim or desire.

Aside from releasing pent up emotions, kids who behave aggressively may also do so because they have been rewarded for the conduct. Moms & dads may have hoped to raise a youngster who is strong and able to stand up for him- or herself in rough situations. More commonly, moms & dads may have inadvertently reinforced the

aggressive behavior through attention. Indeed, even nagging or punishing kids for acting aggressively can make it more likely that they will act that way in the future. Imagine, if you will, a youngster quietly piecing a puzzle together or even playing a video game. He/She has almost completed the puzzle/game but cannot get the final pieces/play to come together. Throughout this quiet half an hour the parent has been around but has said absolutely nothing. Nothing, that is until the youngster becomes obviously frustrated and throws the puzzle/game across the room and begins screaming or swearing loudly. At this point the parent intervenes by reprimanding the youngster and sending him/her to their room. It would appear that the parent has done everything appropriate in this situation, except for the fact that the only attention this youngster received during the time period was negative. If this is commonly the case, the youngster may begin to feel that any attention is better than no attention and as a result may continue to act out disruptively in daily activities. When dealing with aggressive kids, it is worth the effort to praise even the smallest attempt at proper behavior, while paying very little if any attention to negative conduct. Praise can be a very strong motivator.

It is also important to remember that behavior can be very difficult to change and that it takes a lot of patience. Turning an aggressive youngster into a non-aggressive youngster will not happen overnight, and the odd outburst may even occur once the behavior has seemed to restore itself.

In dealing with aggressive kids, regardless of their age, here are a few suggestions to consider:

- **STAY CALM**—No matter how agitated, upset, or aggressive your youngster becomes, it is much easier for them to relax if you are also calm. Despite your own concern, do not try to rationalize with them until they have calmed down. Try sending them into their room, or if you have to take yourself out of the situation and stay in your own bedroom or bathroom. If they become overly violent or aggressive you may need to take drastic measures. Call the police if necessary, but stay calm. The more aggravated your youngster sees you become the more power he or she has gained over you and the more likely he will be to repeat the behavior.

- **REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR**—Although some moms & dads may see rewards as a form of barding or bribery, it does not have to be that extreme. It also can work really well for older kids who in no other way seem to want to stop their aggressive tendencies. Offering your kids well-deserved praise, a play at the park, or an opportunity to play at a friend's house for proper conduct can work wonders. The key is to inform them of what is first expected, to reward them soon if not immediately after they obey, and to always withhold any and all rewards if they do not obey. So for example, if your youngster has made it through a shopping trip without any yelling, crying, or hitting, you may want to stop at the park with them on the way home as a thank you. Offering them the park the next day is already too late as it gives them the chance to act inappropriately in the mean time. For rewards to work effectively they also cannot be given to your kids if they have not done what was expected of them. Toys can be used as well, but they are not advised and it is always best to start off small otherwise your youngster may be asking for things each and every time he or she behaves. The best kind of reward is praise. Kids need to know their moms & dads are proud of them.

- **KNOW YOUR YOUNGSTER'S TEMPERAMENT**—Everyone is born with a unique temperament or personality. Some people tend to be more reserved or timid, while others are always outgoing and spontaneous. Similarly, some kids tend to be more outwardly

assertive and aggressive and others less so. Knowing your youngster's personality allows you the advantage of foresight. If your youngster does not do well with unexpected occurrences, try to keep his or her day routine. Use the insight.

· **KNOW THE TRIGGERS**—Whether it be rush hour traffic or spilled juice, everyone has those things that really aggravate or irritate them, and kids are no different. While they may not be as great at expressing what upsets them, things like a late meal, a missed soccer game, or even a forgotten bedtime story can really agitate kids and make them angry. Knowing that your youngster becomes easily upset under certain circumstances allows moms & dads or care-givers to avoid or work around these situations -- or at the very least, be prepared for them. It might be helpful to keep a journal to figure out what times of day or what occurs prior to each time your youngster becomes upset. If mornings are difficult for your youngster, perhaps allow them some extra time to wake up or do not ask a whole lot from them at this point in time. If not being allowed to purchase a toy from the store usually sends them into a tantrum, warn them ahead of time or if possible just leave them at home.

· **EXPRESS YOURSELF**—Be sure to give your kids the chance to see all of your own personal emotions. Modeling appropriate behavior should not be equated with hiding your feelings or fears from them. It is important for your kids to see that you are also human, and that it is possible to have the esteem and self-control to act rationally even when feelings may not be.

· **BE A ROLE MODEL**—This is perhaps the hardest part of being a parent or caregiver. Role-modeling your own behavior can be difficult even in the easiest of times, but particularly if arguing or fighting is a common occurrence in your household. Nevertheless, you should not expect from others that which you cannot put forth yourself. Even the odd volatile joke or sarcastic remark can be misinterpreted by kids, so watch not only your actions but also your words. Being a role model not only involves controlling your own emotions, but also teaching your kids how to express theirs — both good and bad— appropriately. Modeling support and compassion for others is an important beginning place, so you may want to volunteer some of your time. Simply bring your neighbor some fresh cut flowers or a fruit basket to say "hello". Visit sick kids in the hospital. Work at the food bank with your kids over the Christmas holidays. Be the kind of person that you would like your youngster to grow up to be.

· **AVOID PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT**—It can be very easy to become angered and even outraged at a misbehaving youngster, especially an older one who probably should know better. Just be cautious of how you express your feelings, because the kids are always watching and learning from you. Yelling or hitting an already angered and destructive youngster seems only to up the anti. If you expect your kids to act responsibly and calmly, be sure to do so yourself. And remember, even a ten or twelve year-old girl or boy is still a youngster. Kids do not form intent the same way adults do and often have little desire to hurt or upset you. They merely need to express themselves and have not yet learned to do so in a socially acceptable manner.

· **UNCONCERNED KIDS**— As a final note, if your youngster tends to be destructive often and does not seem to benefit from appropriate parental intervention, or actually seems to enjoy harming others, please seek professional advice.

Mark

## Teens & Salvia: The New Drug of Choice

Sunday, November 02, 2008



Hi Mark,

Things have been going better over this way with our 15 year old daughter. We've taken your advice and are trying to refine the techniques. Thanks for your previous help.

I do have a question and wondered if you had any insight. My daughter left a note from her boyfriend that she received at school laying by the computer last night. I found it this morning. He was talking about them experimenting with something called salvia.

I've been doing some research on this and it seems it is legal here in Indiana. I've discovered it is a hallucinogenic herb. Scary stuff.

From this note and the exchange of IMs I read this morning before I left for work, she seems to be struggling with this and does not want to do it. He stated he was going to try it and it was okay if she didn't.

A couple of days ago she asked about spending some time with this boyfriend and we did the "yes, but..." She fulfilled the but and now has our permission to spend time with him tonight. She is going to a friend's home after school today so I won't see her until she gets in tonight at her curfew.

Know anything about this salvia and its use with teenagers these days? What do you advise I do here?

Thanks,

G.

.....

Salvia divinorum, a green, leafy plant native to the Mazateca region of Mexico, provides its users with a short but intense hallucinogenic experience. A member of the mint family, it is not among the ornamental garden plants sold under the name Salvia at local nurseries.

The high is unlike that from LSD or psychedelic mushrooms, users say, nor is it anything like the experience of smoking marijuana. Salvia is not currently controlled by federal law, but dozens of states have moved to outlaw cultivation and sale of the plant, which is currently freely available for purchase on the Internet.

As an herb with psychedelic properties, Salvia divinorum is of pharmaceutical interest because of its uncommon affinity for opium/endorphin receptors—specifically the kappa opioid receptor. Most drugs with classical "psychotomimetic" properties, like LSD and MDMA, are highly selective for the 5-HT(2A) serotonin receptor.

Salvia is not one of these. Like ibogaine, another hallucinogenic shrub with a weak affinity for kappa opiate receptors, Salvia's active ingredient--Salvinorin A--causes psychoactive effects not usually associated with stimulation of the brain's internal opioid system. Previous research had identified a few such compounds, such as enadoline, which produced similar hallucinogenic effects.

The pharmaceutical industry has already taken a look at the kappa-opioid agonists in the ongoing search for new painkillers, and has so far discovered the usual psychedelic trap of too many unpredictable side effects for a commercial medication.

Classified as an "atypical" psychedelic, the salvia high is intense, dream-like, and short-lived, tapering off after about 30 minutes. An ounce of salvia in leaf form sells for as little as \$40, but more concentrated liquid extracts sell for as much as \$60 per gram.

Salvia's addictive potential is low to nonexistent. No hallucinogen such as LSD or peyote has ever been found to be addictive in the classical sense.

Nonetheless, fearing that the inexpensive plant might become "the next marijuana," as an Associated Press report put it last month, 24 states have passed, or are considering, legislation to restrict access to salvia. Elsewhere, sale of the drug has been restricted in Spain, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Australia, and other countries. In the AP article, a Florida state legislator alleged—with unintended irony: "As soon as we make one drug illegal, kids start looking around for other drugs they can buy legally. This is just the next one."

There are many reasons why Salvia divinorum is not likely to be "the next one." According to drug expert Rick Doblin of the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS), salvia "tastes terrible" and is "not going to be extremely popular." The popular drug information site EROWID describes salvia as "more scary than fun" for many users, concluding that, whether smoked or swallowed, the plant is "aversive for many who try it." Like ibogaine, salvia is no party drug. It can result in confusion, dizziness, depersonalization, and all the other hallmarks of a "bad trip."

A related question is the extent to which kappa opioid receptor boosters might reduce the craving for addictive drugs. Ibogaine has been touted for having precisely this effect on heroin addicts and others. However, an early study of kappa opioid receptor-active compounds did not find any reduction in self-administration of cocaine.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) is studying salvia. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), citing salvia as a "drug of concern," is evaluating it.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:57AM (-08:00)

## He wants to take 2 days off of school next week to go hunting...

Tuesday, November 04, 2008

Hi,

I have been applying your techniques for about 5 weeks now and can say that things have definitely gotten better. We have had a couple moments but otherwise have been much happier and getting along great. I have read the emails regarding the poor grades and how I should let my son (14 yrs) take ownership of his grades and treat school like it's his job. I completely understand that and agree that the concept should work. I've been fighting with him for 4 years and gotten nowhere so it's obvious that I can't control the outcome. He thinks he can never do good enough for me. So I have told him that it is his job now and his future and he is in charge of it. He only has to live up to his own expectations.

Here's my question...he wants to take 2 days off of school next week to go hunting, a once a year opportunity. He says he will take care of making up all of the work that he will miss for those days ahead of time. I don't know if I should have a say in this or not if I am giving him the control. He has assignments that he missed and can't make up so I don't feel he should be taking time off. But since I've just given him the control and ownership should I let him prove to himself that he can take care of it and that I trust him to do it? The past assignments were missed while I was trying to be in control. Are these two separate things? Where do I draw the line and do I ever step in? Or do I completely give him the control? I understand missing school is not something that is acceptable but there are times when I can see exceptions. If he were pulling all A's and B's I wouldn't have a problem with it at all. I am just really confused about turning the ownership over at this point and where that leaves me with this decision.

Please help.

C.

.....

Hi C.,

This is a great question. Fortunately, the answer is an easy one.

"Schooling" takes place on multiple stages -- not just in the classroom. So this hunting trip will be much more of a learning experience for him than sitting in class. This is a wonderful opportunity to take education to a new, exciting level.

Let him go ...forget about the make-up work (that's his job).

Mark

P.S. As a former teacher, I would want him to go on the trip. And I would have him take pictures so he could give a report to the class regarding the trip.

## Risperdol and the treatment of ODD...

Tuesday, November 04, 2008

Hello Mark,

What do you know about Risperdol and the treatment of ODD?

S.

.....

Hi S.,

In choosing drugs for ODD, look for drugs that have been proven safe in children, have no long term side effects, and have been found in research studies to be effective in extremely aggressive children and adolescents or in Comorbid conditions which children with CD often have. Each drug has certain problems that need to be watched for. The current medical literature suggests three basic principles when using psychiatric drugs in children:

1. Start low
2. Go slow, and
3. Monitor carefully

Start low means that you do not start any of these drugs at the usual dose, or the maximum dose. When you have pneumonia, it can be a real emergency. You want to give people plenty of medicine right away, and if there are problems, then you reduce it. Unfortunately, many people use this same strategy in the medical treatment of ODD. The problem is that big doses can cause big problems, and when the problems affect your mind and personality, this usually means trouble for the person taking the medicines. So start with the lowest dose possible. For example, if you use a drug called Clonidine, for a boy about 60 lb., know that the dose that will probably work for most boys that size is two pills a day. If you gave him that to start out with, you might win and it would work. But if he happens to be sensitive to that drug, he could have big problems. Although they would be reversible problems, it would probably make most children and adolescents and or parents never want to take the drug again. So what do you do? Start with a half of a pill a day, about 25% of the usual dose. That way if the child is sensitive to the drug, it causes little problems. Many children respond to drugs at very low doses, far below the usual recommendations.

Re: go slow. ODD is not an acute illness. Less than 10% of the people I see with this need to be treated very quickly. Most people whom I see with this problem have had it for years. As a result, there is no need to increase the dose quickly. By going slowly, it is a lot easier to manage any side effects because things don't happen suddenly. Also, it is easier to find the lowest effective dose.

Re: monitor. For each of the medical treatments for ODD, there are specific side effects, which need to be checked regularly. Some common ones are monitoring weight so that



people are gaining weight, watch for tics, watch for depression, checking blood pressure and pulse, checking blood tests and EKGs, and making sure parents know what the side effects are of the different medications. In this way, if there is a problem, you can pick it up early and avoid the horror stories, some of which are true, about the medical treatment of this problem.

The following are drugs which have been tested in adults and children who are violent and aggressive for a variety of reasons – from ADHD to brain damage, to Conduct Disorder, and of course ODD:

**Atypical Antipsychotics**—These drugs were first used for schizophrenia, and that is how they got this name. They are now commonly used for many conditions where people are not psychotic. As you can see, these are not benign medications. All of them can have serious side effects. As a result, they are not used for small problems.

**Risperidone (Risperdal)**—This drug was initially developed to be a safer drug for adult schizophrenia. It was then found to be effective in children with schizophrenia and other psychoses. Then it was found to be helpful in some children with Tic disorders. Based on those findings it has been used in Conduct Disorder and aggression. These studies are probably the most exciting news for the medical treatment of CD in 20 years. Risperidone is called Risperdal and comes in a variety of sizes; .25mg, .5 mg, 1mg, 2mg and liquid. It also helps Tourettes and psychosis. Usually this is given twice a day. This drug usually shows an effect within hours of a dose. There are more studies done on this drug than all the other atypical antipsychotics combined.

**Olanzapine (Zyprexa)**—This drug was recently approved for mania in adults. It has been studied less in children. However the early reports are positive. The usual dose is about 5-15 mg a day. It comes in 2.5 mg, 5mg and 10 mg. It is also called Zyprexa. It is more expensive than Risperidone and in adults is associated with more weight gain. This can be given once a day.

**Quetiapine (Seroquel)**—This drug is a little different than the above drugs as it seems to cause very little problems with things like tremor and stiffness. In adolescents it can lower the blood pressure so the dose has to be increased slower. The dosage range is 200-800 mg a day. There are only a few articles on its use in children and adolescents, but these have been quite positive for mood disorders. I do not know of any study on using in CD. It comes in a 25mg and 100 mg size and has to be given twice a day. It is called Seroquel.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:24AM (-08:00)

## Son getting excitement from the meltdowns...

Tuesday, November 04, 2008

Thanks Mark. I'm really excited about this program, and just watching the videos I did yesterday and doing the quiz has made me realize it's going to help immensely. My teens aren't out of control yet, but one of them certainly is an intense child and displays many of the traits you speak about. The explanation of that type of child getting excitement from the meltdowns is something I've thought for a long time but didn't know how to put in

perspective. I am looking forward to this program and have already learned and implemented some of your ideas.

D.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 03:12PM (-08:00)

## Teachers Triggering Temper Tantrums in Students

Wednesday, November 12, 2008



Mark-

I'm a middle school teacher. Actually I purchased your ebook to help me understand – and cope with – some of my unruly students. It has been an immense help. One question: How do you deal with a student who – out of the clear blue – slips

into a temper tantrum?

Thanks,

M.

.....

Hi M.,

When a youngster reportedly has 'temper tantrums' in school, one of the first questions I always ask is whether this is also happening in the home. If it is, then is it only happening when homework or school-related matters arise, or is it happening in other situations as well? Thinking about under what conditions the kid loses control can help us determine where to start looking, what accommodations might be needed, and what other assessments and/or interventions might be needed.

Suppose that the kid is not having 'temper tantrums' at home, but is having them in school. While it is still possible that it is the kid's disability that is the primary contributor the problem (e.g., a kid with depression may "explode" in school when asked to concentrate or produce for long periods of time), we also need to look closely at how the school is handling the kid. Have they made enough accommodations? If there's a plan in place, have they followed it?

In my experience, it seems that in some cases, school personnel have been responsible for triggering a temper tantrum or pushing the kid past his or her limits. Consider the following (and unfortunately true) example where a teacher knows a kid has Oppositional Defiant Disorder and that one of the kid's symptoms is that he "has to" finish something he is reading. On a particular day, the teacher instructs the class to put their books down as it is time to do another activity. The kid with ODD doesn't comply, and the teacher cues him again to put the book down and start the next task. The kid with ODD continues reading and tries to leave the room to go finish the book. The teacher refuses, blocks the

doorway, and tries to take the book away. The kid with ODD "explodes," and swings at the teacher.

In the preceding example, one could argue that we should hold the youngster responsible for his behavior and that he has to learn that no matter what, he cannot take a swing at people. And on some level, I'd agree with that. The problem with the school disciplining the kid for it, however, is that such consequences may not reduce the likelihood of it happening again if the youngster's compulsion is that severe, and it fails to discipline the teacher who failed to respect the youngster's limits. If teachers "get in the face" of youngsters who are known to have behavior problems, then aren't they as responsible for what happens as the youngster?

In my opinion, when it comes to school, the teachers, as the adults, have the responsibility to manage themselves so that they don't engage in an escalating pattern with the youngster. And one of the most effective ways to help school personnel recognize the limits and what to do in particular situations is staff development. Teachers are often concerned that they will lose their authority with the class if they don't "discipline" an out-of-control child. The reality is that their "discipline" is often punitive and escalates a bad situation into a full-blown "temper tantrum."

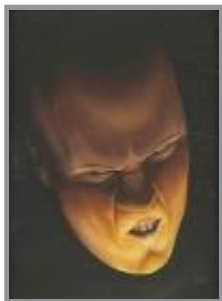
Even when teachers are not provoking or causing the youngster's problems, they may be the youngster's last hope of restoring themselves to a calmer state. Learning how to stay calm, recognize the signs of impending explosions, and helping the youngster make a graceful exit so that they can calm themselves are important skills. Realizing that you are not "rewarding the youngster for misbehavior" if you allow them to switch to an activity that is inherently interesting to them and that helps them focus and calm themselves is also important. Maintaining your empathy for an explosive kid can make all the difference.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:21AM (-08:00)

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder [ODD] in Adults

Thursday, November 13, 2008



Dear Mark

I have just signed on for your e-course. My son has recently been diagnosed with ODD and thank God I have an answer to the challenge (understatement of the year!) that it has been trying to understand what was going on with him. He is only eight years old but I have had nightmares about what would become of his future and of my sanity!

The thing is the more I read about the disorder for my son, the more pieces fall in place for the troubles I have had and am still having with my husband and marriage. He is sooooo much like our boy in nearly every way. At the same time, all that I read on the subject pertains to children and teenagers. Although he would probably have a fit if he knew I was even thinking it about him, i desperately need to know if adults can suffer from the disorder as well?

Regards,

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Re: ...i desperately need to know if adults can suffer from the disorder as well?

Absolutely. And the good thing is: You can use many of the parenting strategies that you will be using with your son with your husband.

It is very common for a mother to feel as though she is raising two children -- her child and her husband. This topic leads to a discussion about co-dependency on the mother's part (which I don't have time to get into right now).

Maladaptive behaviors are serious enough when the adult cannot maintain employment or constantly moves from job to job, has trouble with "significant other" relationships (possible multiple divorces), or has a strong dependence on alcohol, substances or negative habits.

Although we're talking about adults here, young people can engage in similar behaviors when they have trouble in school, have difficulty making and keeping friends, and rely on fancy toys or video games to synthetically alter their mood.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:21AM (-08:00)

## Advice regarding helping our son adopt better sleep, nutrition, and...

Friday, November 14, 2008

Mark,

You may not be able to offer any specific advice on our issue, but I have to bring this up – we are at our rope's end.

Our son, R\_\_\_, is having a tough time focusing on his academics. He is 16, a junior in public high school, Port Orange Florida. He is in the IB (International Baccalaureate) program. Over the past year and a half his grades have steadily decreased: his current reporting period (4 week) GPA is 1.7 a solid "D." He is an avid and accomplished soccer player, but at the rate he's going he will be on academic suspension. His outlook for college is at best, not good – despite the fact that he definitely seems to want to go to college. (We are beginning to wonder if the IB program is just too hard for him, although says he really wants to do it.)

We've just subscribed to OPS. We've read your online material, in particular advice to

one parent regarding a similar situation in which you made the following points:

- (1) Let him do his own work – that's his job, his teachers are his bosses.
- (2) His sleep habits are poor – he stays up late – often past midnight, as late as 1:00. Wakeup is a chore taking 3-5 attempts.

Adding to this is the following:

(3) He has very poor nutrition habits. My wife has tried many times to prepare healthy meals – he will have no part of them, but drinks energy drinks, eats bagels and cream cheese, pizza, an occasional ham and cheese sandwich, never vegetables.

(4) He is hearing impaired – his acuity in the higher frequencies is significantly impaired. He has aids, but refuses to wear them (we suspect it may be a question of vanity, and refusal to acknowledge the impairment).

We have tried urging him to do his homework. That has not worked. Recently we have tried incentivizing him with money for good performance – his grades have just gotten worse (down to the current GPA).

My wife tends to have an authoritarian parenting style; I tend to have an indulgent style – so there is polarization in our approach – which may be making things worse.

Based on what I've just read (your advice to a parent in a similar situation minus the hearing and nutrition problems) we will likely follow your advice, and

- (1) Remove the TV from his room
- (2) Do the one reveille call in the morning – perhaps even with a real bugle.

We are also considering restricting his social life (going out on weekends, but no weekend sleepovers), but we would like your opinion.

Bottom line: If you have ANY specific advice regarding helping our son adopt better sleep, nutrition, and academic habits, we would SINCERELY appreciate it.

Many thanks in advance for any specific help,

Desperately yours,

H.

.....

Hi H.,

Re: sleep.

Many parents allow their children to stay up late on weekends to watch TV and play video games...

BIG mistake!

...then to make matters worse, they allow their children to sleep in on Sat. and Sun. mornings...

Another BIG mistake!

Why? Because it takes until the middle of the school week (i.e., approx. Wednesday) for the child to make up for sleep deficits (i.e., they get only about 4 -5 hours of sleep Sunday night since they have to get up on Monday morning for school...

...then the weekend comes, and the cycle starts all over.

Don't make these mistakes.

Also, he should only get one wake-up call. You are clearly taking the responsibility AWAY from him by nagging him to get up. As long as you nag -- he'll sleep.

Re: nutrition.

You have bigger fish to fry than this one. This should go in the "pick your battles carefully" file.

Re: academic habits.

I think you know where I stand on this issue since you've already read the recommendations.

Final point: I'm a bit concerned that you are rushing through the program. The academic biz is in Session #4 / Week #4 -- you just signed-up yesterday!

Rushing things WILL be the kiss of failure - I promise.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Son

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:18AM (-08:00)

## Son used his step mom's credit card to purchase an online gaming me...

Monday, November 17, 2008

Mark, we just found out that my 16 y.o. son used his step mom's credit card to purchase an online gaming membership. His bio mom caught him stealing checks from her husband a year ago. The credit card theft is a felony here in Texas. How should I handle this with him?

.....

When a teen has been caught stealing, a parent's reaction should depend on whether it's the first time or there's a pattern of stealing. When there's pattern of stealing, it's recommended that parents follow through with stricter consequences. For example, when

a teen is caught stealing, the parent can take the teen back to the store and meet with the security department to explain and apologize for what happened.

The embarrassment of facing up to what he or she did by having to return a stolen item makes for an everlasting lesson on why stealing is wrong.

Further punishment, particularly physical punishment, is unnecessary and could make the teen angry and more likely to engage in even worse behavior.

If it's a first-time offense, some stores and businesses may accept an apology and not necessarily press charges. However, some stores press charges the first time around. And there's often little sympathy for repeat offenders.

Kids of all ages should know that stealing is a crime and can lead to consequences far worse than being grounded, including juvenile detention centers and even prison.

If a teen steals money from a parent, the teen should be offered options for paying back the money, like doing extra chores around the house. It's important, however, that a parent does not "bait" the teen by leaving out money in the hopes of catching the teen in the act. That could damage the sense of trust between a parent and teen.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:05AM (-08:00)

## Teen Cutting & Suicidal Threats

Monday, November 24, 2008



How do I deal with my 14 year old daughter's "unspoken" threats to hurt herself/commit suicide? She has never said anything to me, but I know from reports to her school guidance counselor, her comments/poetry on my space, and having heard from her friend's and their parents. She knows I am aware because of school, parent, and child services involvement. However, when I try to discuss it or when it is

brought up by the school, parents, or others she denies it (e.g. that she said or did anything self-destructive, or that she want to die). She has been cutting herself for some time and acting out in many other ways. This self destructive behavior and comments have been going on for nearly a year and continue to escalate with each passing week. My gut instinct based on my knowing her, tells me she is doing this to manipulate people (especially me, but also friends for attention) and situations, but I am also concerned about the underlying emotional factors that are driving this behavior. She refuses to participate in any type of counselling and will not talk to me or any adults about it. I have been told by the school and the authorities that until she does something drastic that there is nothing they can/will do. Can you provide any advice/resources?

.....

Hi J.,

Re: cutting.

Please review the page on cutting: [www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com/cutting](http://www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com/cutting)

Re: threats of suicide.

Hormones, problems at school, feelings of inadequacy and emotional development can all play a part when an adolescent threatens suicide. Sometimes they are looking for attention, and sometimes they have every intention of following through with their threats. Regardless of the motivation, however, you should never treat it as an empty threat. When your adolescent threatens suicide, you should act quickly and ask questions later.

The most important thing to do when your adolescent threatens suicide is to keep her in your line of sight. Even if you are absolutely certain that your adolescent is crying out for attention -- and therefore has no intention of following through -- you will never forgive yourself if your suspicions are wrong.

Realize that you cannot handle this yourself, no matter how close you are with your adolescent. Threats of suicide mean that you need an expert's assistance in the matter, regardless of the time or circumstance. You might consider calling a psychiatrist and making an emergency appointment. This might be difficult if you don't live in a large city, but most psychiatrists will arrange emergency visits.

Here's more info on teen suicide:

1. Anti-social behaviors are not good indicators of suicide risk as once thought. Suicide is equally common among popular kids as it is among unpopular kids.
2. Movies, music, books and web sites do not lead to suicide. Often these media get blamed when a suicide occurs because certain types of music or web sites are found among the deceased possessions. In reality suicidal people tend to seek these things out rather than be led astray by them. A sudden and extreme interest in these things can be a precursor to a suicide attempt.
3. Peer pressure is at its most influential during the teen years and things like bullying and exclusion by peers can cause teens to see death as the only way out or as a way of gaining attention from peer groups that ignore them.
4. Statistically speaking suicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers, a close second to automobile accidents. Some experts feel that many car accidents are actually suicides and that the rates are so close that suicide may actually be the leading cause of death in teens.
5. Suicide clusters, multiple suicides within a closed community or peer group, often occur and are not fully understood by experts. When a suicide occurs at your school or in your community it is wise to seek help for friends who have threatened suicide or attempted suicide in the past as cluster victims are not always known to one another.
6. Suicide pacts are a youth phenomenon and are almost non-existent in other age groups. Experts feel that peer pressure may be in part to blame since it is at its most influential during the teen years. If a friend ever pressures you to commit suicide or to aid them in their attempt seek help immediately.



7. Suicide threats should always be taken seriously. Even threats veiled as jokes can mask a sincere desire to harm oneself. Always seek help for a friend who threatens suicide or repeatedly jokes about killing themselves.

8. The reasons why suicide is so prevalent among teens is still a mystery but experts do have some ideas as to why teenagers are at a greater risk. The three most common factors considered to account for the high suicide rate among teens are; an immortality complex in which teens don't appear to grasp the finality of death, reactive-immaturity in which the psyche is thought to not yet have developed enough maturity to control emotional reactivity to negative or hurtful occurrences, and broad hormonal fluctuations that can lead to irrational thought processes and bouts of depression.

9. There is no such thing as a failed suicide attempt; these are really desperate cries for help. Often people think that somebody who tries to commit suicide but survives is only seeking attention but in reality suicide survivors are 12x more likely to eventually die from suicide than teens who threaten suicide but do not ever act on the threat. People who have attempted suicide and survived are at a high risk to eventually take their own life.

10. While clinical depression is common among suicidal people of all ages it is less common in teens. Suicidal teens are more likely to be reacting to social and environmental pressures when they become suicidal than they are to be suffering from a true mental illness. For this reason suicide is often harder for experts to predict in teens.

Hope this helps,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:20AM (-08:00)

## Drug-Addicted Son

Monday, November 24, 2008

Update on the situation here. My son (who decided to move out with friends) came home today and asked my husband if he could come home. My husband told him that we would have no problem if the kid that we had last year came home but not the kid he has become. Mark I really had a good kid up until last summer of 2008. He was always appreciative and respectful now I have this monster. All of Chris's friends that he had hate the new group he started hanging around with they call this group the kids that are going no where. Chris started smoking drugs with this bunch. Chris told my husband that he doesn't see the problem with him having this habit. The reason he left was because we would not tolerate this behaviour, I am not going to change it is against my values and my morales to have a kid sitting there doing drugs. This kid choose this live style not me. It was like he choose to lose.

What steps do I do here, I don't want him home if it is going to be the same old thing. He ran away in March and came back 6 weeks later and we had him do a contract with the rules. No smoking dope, no skipping school, showing respect to us. He came home lasted 2 days, and he was telling me that he was staying out all night on a Sunday night and I would see him Monday night, I told him that if he left he would have consequences he told me that he was out for the night and that it was none of my business where he

was going. I locked up the house the next day left a note on the door he could come back home on Saturday when my husband and I were home and discuss the situation. We were have a roof put on that day, he asked the roofer for the ladder and got in through the bathroom window. He left me a note saying well I told you I was only going out for 1 night and I would be home and I will see you on Saturday. This kid had decided he was running the show here, my house and I was taking orders from him. He came home on Saturday and kept up this behaviour. He got kicked out of his co-op program. This kid had won the leadership award at school and the engineering award, MVP 3 years in a row in soccer. My husband as me to please hold on until after June so that the kid would get his credits for school and I bit my tongue. By July I had a real monster here and that's when he stole the car, stole money from us etc. and I started to use your techniques and it was working until the one day he was getting to aggressive and then I told him that if he hated it here that he should work out a plan to leave and that is when he called his friend's mother and asked her if he could still move in with her and she said I will sent my son over with the truck to get your stuff and off he went. The next week there was a t-shirt that was knotted up and left at my door step I opened the t-shirt and inside the knot was sharp pieces of glass, the same week my car was keyed.

Mark, my father was a violent alcoholic and so was my husband's dad. We hating living at home, just hated it. I don't want round 2. What do you do to get someone to realize that you are not going to change but they need to?

My brother thinks that when he talks to me that it just gives him more fuel for the fire, to say yes that is why I don't live there with them. That keeps him going for another few weeks. When I see him or talk to him on the phone I just keep it to 30 seconds and no more. I figure why give him more fuel for the fire. I think this was another one of his acts to con us. I don't want it to go back to what it was before he left.

Any advice. I am open to anything and even criticism if I am taking a hard approach.

A.

.....

Hi A.,

Your son has a huge risk of alcoholism and drug addiction given his heredity. I think it's safe to say that he will either have to stay clean and sober -- no use whatsoever, or he will continue his decline.

I have worked with both adult and teen alcoholics/drug addicts since 1994. The one thing that continues to disturb me greatly -- even after 14 years of working with these clients -- is the unfortunate fact that most must hit several hard bottoms over the course of several years (if not decades) before they can finally agree that their chemical abuse/dependence is a real problem that needs to be addressed. Then, and only then, will the client pursue sobriety.

The insidiousness of drug abuse (i.e., what makes it so dangerous) is that the "drug" becomes the most important thing in the person's life ...more important than health ...more important than family and friends ...more important than getting an education ...more important than work ...sanity ...God ...and even life.

Your son does not see his use of chemicals as a problem. Thus he is not going to stop using them any time soon. So you can say, "Once you start rehab, we will consider letting you come home -- but until that time, you must live elsewhere."

Mark

My Addicted Son

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:52AM (-08:00)

## I felt my only solution was to ask her to move out...

Tuesday, November 25, 2008

Hi,

I am a mother of three children and I run a daycare from my house. I have a sixteen year old daughter who I have always referred to as having intense anger Issues. Over the years I have felt I dealt with my children fairly assertively and mildly indulgent I got 63 on your test. My son is 14 my other daughter is 8. All my children have been expected to do certain things around the house and have been issued consequences for inappropriate behaviours. My kids are good kids the two older ones each have outside jobs. Pay for most of their things they need. They are all good students and respect curfews and most rules in our home. Now the problem my husband and I have is with my sixteen yr old when she is presented with something she does not agree with she becomes extremely intense very quickly at times without much warning. She swears and becomes physical at times. I have tried the poker face response and have a problem with my other children seeing her react this way. They see that she is getting away with it all though she usually receives a consequence afterwards and frankly accepts it well. But my other kids find her intensity scary. She has been diagnosed recently as bipolar. After a recent incidence I felt my only solution was to ask her to move out which she has done. The house is so much less tension as we all seemed to be walking on glass constantly. I would love to have her back. What would you suggest be the best solution on doing this without making her think she has control.

.....

I'm assuming that - since your daughter has recently been diagnosed with bipolar – she is seeing a Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist who is in the process of trying to find the right dosage and combination of medications to treat her symptoms. This process will take a year or two. Once she is stabilized from a medical standpoint, she should be much less impulsive and explosive. So, proper medication is key here.

Recent research suggests that kids and teens with bipolar disorder don't always have the same behavioral patterns that adults with bipolar disorder do. For example, kids who have bipolar disorder may experience particularly rapid mood changes and may have some of the other mood-related symptoms listed below, such as irritability and high levels of anxiety. But they may not show other symptoms that are more commonly seen in adults.

Because brain function is involved, the ways people with bipolar disorder think, act, and

feel are all affected. This can make it especially difficult for other people to understand their condition. It can be incredibly frustrating if other people act as though someone with bipolar disorder should just "snap out of it," as if a person who is sick can become well simply by wanting to. Bipolar disorder isn't a sign of weakness or a character flaw; it's a serious medical condition that requires treatment, just like any other condition.

Although there's no cure for bipolar disorder, treatment can help stabilize a person's moods and help the person manage and control symptoms. Like other teens with long-lasting medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or epilepsy), teens with bipolar disorder need to work closely with their doctors and other medical professionals to treat it. This team of medical professionals, together with the teen and family, develop what is called a "treatment plan." Teens with bipolar disorder will probably receive medication, such as a mood stabilizer, from a psychiatrist or other medical doctor. A psychologist or other type of counselor will provide counseling or psychotherapy for the teen and his or her family. Doctors will watch the symptoms closely and offer additional treatment advice if necessary.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:50AM (-08:00)

## Teens & Drugs

Tuesday, November 25, 2008



Moms & dads can help through early education about drugs, open communication, good role modeling, and early recognition if problems are developing. If there is any suspicion that there is a problem, parents must find the most appropriate intervention for their child.

The decision to get treatment for a child or adolescent is serious. Moms & dads are encouraged to seek consultation from a mental health professional when making decisions about substance abuse treatment for children or adolescents.

Parents and families must be informed consumers and should be involved in their child's recovery. Here are some important things to consider:

- Addicted or drug-abusing individuals with co-existing mental disorders should have both disorders treated in an integrated way. Because addictive disorders and mental disorders often occur in the same individual, individuals should be assessed and treated for the co-occurrence of the other type of disorder.
- Counseling (individual and/or group) and other behavioral therapies are critical components of effective treatment. In therapy, teens look at issues of motivation, build skills to resist drug use, replace drug-using activities with constructive and rewarding behaviors, and improve problem-solving skills. Behavioral therapy also facilitates interpersonal relationships and the teen's ability to function in the home and community.
- Effective treatment must attend to the multiple needs of the individual -- not just the drug

use. Any associated medical, psychological, social, and cognitive problem must be addressed.

- Medical detoxification is only the first stage of addiction treatment and by itself does little to change long-term drug use. Medical detoxification safely manages the acute physical symptoms of withdrawal associated with stopping drug use. While detoxification alone is rarely sufficient to help addicts achieve long-term abstinence, for some individuals it is a strongly indicated precursor to effective drug addiction treatment.

- No single treatment is appropriate for all teens. It is important to match treatment settings, interventions, and services to each individual's particular problems and needs. This is critical to his or her ultimate success in returning to healthy functioning in the family, school, and society.

- Recovery from addiction can be a long-term process and frequently requires multiple episodes of treatment. As with other chronic illnesses, relapses to drug use can occur during or after successful treatment episodes. Addicted individuals may require prolonged treatment and multiple episodes of treatment to achieve long-term abstinence and fully restored functioning. Participation in self-help support programs during and following treatment often is helpful in maintaining abstinence. Moms & dads should ask what aftercare treatment services are available for continued or future treatment.

- Remaining in treatment for an adequate period of time is critical for treatment effectiveness and positive change. Each person is different and the amount of time in treatment will depend on his or her problems and needs. Research shows that for most individuals, the beginning of improvement begins at about 3 months into treatment. After this time, there is usually further progress toward recovery. Length of stay in a residential program can range from 8 to 18 months, depending upon the individual's willingness and commitment.

- Treatment does not need to be voluntary to be effective. Strong motivation can facilitate the treatment process. Sanctions or enticements in the family, school setting, or juvenile justice system can increase significantly both treatment entry and retention rates and the success of drug treatment interventions.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:01AM (-08:00)

## Kids & Cussing

Thursday, November 27, 2008

My son will not do what he is told and everyday is a fight... help. He also has a foul mouth, swearing, ect... what can I do to get him to stop?

.....

While there are many ways parents can help children avoid bad language, there is no substitute for avoiding it yourself.

Most children under 3-years-old won't comprehend that certain words are unacceptable. Often, ignoring the offense may be the best defense when dealing with the very young.

But after their third birthday, they're more likely to understand that some words are naughty. So take action. Get down on your knees, look your child directly in the eye, and tell him, "That's a word that we don't use in our family." Make the words - not the child - the culprit to give him a chance to move away from the behavior.

If your child persists in using such language, show him you mean business with disciplinary action outlined in the My Out-of-Control Child eBook. For a four-year-old, that may mean calling a short time-out or taking away a favorite toy. Kids a little older may benefit from time spent in their rooms.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:13AM (-08:00)

## Teens Who Run Away

Thursday, November 27, 2008

16 year old daughter refuses to come home ...don't know where she is staying ...skipping school ...has a foul mouth lately ...has a boyfriend that is doing same as she is.

.....

When parents begin to implement appropriate discipline for broken house rules, some children may respond by threatening to runaway from home if they do not get their way. If this occurs, defuse the situation, but do NOT threaten or challenge your child.

For example: "Daughter, you know that I cannot control you. And if you really want to run away from home, I cannot stop you. I cannot watch you 24 hours a day, and I can't lock you up in the house. But no one in the world loves you the way I do. That is why we have established these house rules. Because I love you, I cannot stand by and watch you hurt yourself by \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., not going to school, using drugs or alcohol, destroying house property), and running away from home will not solve the problem. You and I know it will only make matters worse."

When your child runs away...

Teens who run away are not bad. They have made a bad decision. They got themselves caught up in pressures that they felt the need to escape from. Instead of facing their problem and solving it, they chose to run from it. We need to teach our teen how to face their problems, even if the problem is us. When they have the right tools to fix some of the things that may be going on in their lives, the pressure lessens, and there is no more need for them to escape.

Every teen either has tried or knows another teen who has run away.

I haven't met a teen yet who didn't know of someone's experience of running away. This can be a real problem, considering most teens will glamorize the experience.

Parents of teens who run away are not bad parents. You cannot lock them in. As much as you would like to build a wall around them, it is their choice whether or not to walk out the door.

If your teens runs:

- Call the Police, IMMEDIATELY! Don't wait 24 hours, do it right away.
- Ask investigators to enter your child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Persons File. There is no waiting period for entry into NCIC for children under age 18.
- Get the name and badge number of the officer you speak with.
- Call back often.
- Call everyone your child knows and enlist their help.
- Search everywhere, but do not leave your phone unattended.
- Search your teens room for anything that may give you a clue as to where he went.
- You may also want to check your phone bill for any calls they may have made recently.
- Call the National Runaway Switchboard 1-800-621-4000. You can leave a message for your child with them.

When your teen comes home:

Take a break from each other. Do not start talking about it right away. Your emotions are too high at this point to get anywhere in a conversation. Go two separate directions until you both have gotten some rest.

Ask and Listen. Why did they leave? You may want to evaluate a rule or two after speaking with them, but do not do so while having this talk. Tell them you are willing to think about it, and you will let them know.

Tell them how you felt about them going. Let them know that they hurt you by leaving. Let them know that there isn't a problem that can't solve. If they ever feel that running away might solve something, have them talk to you first. You could always offer other choices, so they can make a better decision.

Get some help. If this isn't the first time or you have problems communicating when they get back, it's time to ask for help. This could be a person that your child respects (e.g., an aunt or uncle), or you may want to seek professional help.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:17AM (-08:00)

## She has started to hit and kick us...

Saturday, November 29, 2008

We started your program with our 3-year-old daughter 2 weeks ago, and when we ignore her she screams at us "...talk to me ...look at me" and she has started to hit and kick us.

.....

I would suggest you start making a concerted effort to "catch your daughter being good." When she cooperates, is helpful, or shows kindness, make sure you praise her, and give her a smile and a hug. Be specific with your praise, such as "I really like the way you played quietly while I was talking on the telephone," or "Honey, I'm so proud of the way you put your toys away!" This is providing intensity when "things are going right."

The other side of this equation is that you need to wear your poker face when she whines, complains, or begs. If you repeatedly nag or lecture her, you are giving her exactly what she wants -- your intensity. When kids are acting out in order to get intensity, I always tell parents, "Don't get mad -- get boring." Eventually your daughter will learn that good behavior gets rewarded by praise and approval, while crying and whining get a consequence (usually in the form of a time out). Of course if she does something aggressive or destructive, you'll need to put her in a longer time out or give her a stiffer consequence, but administer the consequence calmly, in a businesslike, matter of fact way. Remember that if you let her get you upset and you start yelling or lecturing, she's gotten exactly what she wanted...your intensity.

Also, make sure you do special activities with her individually, apart from any other children.

==> Here are a ton of tips re: temper tantrums.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:21PM (-08:00)

## Oppositional Defiant Husband

Sunday, November 30, 2008



What you have described is the behavior of my husband who is 45 yrs old. We have been married 25 years. He does the opposite of what he is asked -- not just by me -- but his associates. Can this information help me deal in a better way with him, especially his temper and denial of any mistakes on his part. No counseling has never worked. Counselors in his mind are idiots.

Thanks,

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Great question. And the surprising answer is "Yes ...it will help with an oppositional, defiant spouse."

A significant number of mother's who join Online Parent Support state that they feel as though they are raising two children -- their child and their husband. The really cool (and unforeseen) benefit to this program is that the material will work on anyone (e.g., child, spouse, coworker, parent, etc.). Most people don't believe me when I say this, because it all "sounds too good to be true" -- and the old adage is "if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is."

This is where I put my money where my mouth is. If it doesn't work -- email me and I'll give you a refund.



Do I have magic bullets? No. I just have a lot of experience in dealing with the oppositional, defiant personality.

Dealing with difficult people is really confusing and often troubling (unless you know how they think and what motivates them).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Husband

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:31AM (-08:00)

## Teens & Stealing

Friday, December 05, 2008

Hi P.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

On Thu, Dec 4, 2008 at 4:45 PM, P. and P. M. wrote:

Hi Mark,

This is a wonderful service you provide. I have read most of your e-book and have pick up a lot of tips already.

Thank you for the kind words.

I have a question for you which I couldn't find an answer in the book.

My teen daughter (one of twins) is constantly taking things (particularly) my things without asking and yes I am going to use the cliché "I have tried everything" to stop this behaviour. I have explained to her, if she asks there is the likelihood of me saying "yes" if it is returned after she has finished with it, but she doesn't return the things and still keeps taking without asking. The taking also includes taking and eating foods. I have started making her pay for certain items of food she eats, eg choc chips which I use for cookies.

Preteens and teens know they're not supposed to steal, but might steal for the thrill of it or because their friends do. Some might believe they can get away with it. As they're given more control over their lives, some teens steal as a way of rebelling. They might be angry or want attention. Their behavior may reflect stress at home, school, or with friends. In other cases, teens steal because they can't afford to pay for what they need or want — for example, they may steal to get popular name-brand items. In some cases, they may take things to support drug habits. Whatever the reason for stealing, parents need to find out the root of the behavior and address other underlying problems that may surface.

It's recommended that parents follow through with stricter consequences when teens steal. This is covered in Session #3 [When You Want Something From Your Kid].

We lost our eldest daughter in April, 2008 from a rare disease. I am not sure if some of this behaviour is to do with grieving. My thinking it is more attention seeking. She is a

very loud person and when she wants to be heard, she yells or screams. I say to her "No one hears a loud person as they are focused on the loudness and not at what the person is saying." We have other issues with her too, but the above are most concerning to me at present.

I would be very pleased to receive some strategies on how to deal with these issues. Also I have difficulty thinking up consequences or punishment for issues. Do you have a list of consequences?

Here are a few ideas:

- Confession— Confession is more powerful because it requires us to acknowledge to ourselves and then to state to another person what we did wrong. Confession is the opposite of lying to prevent punishment; and therefore, it should be rewarded. But, confession doesn't erase the need to make amends or face other consequences of wrongdoing
- Extra chores— It's especially good for older teens who know how to do the chore on their own. They may do it in a huff because it's certainly no fun, but it gets the point across that you will not let misbehavior slide.
- Making amends— There is a healing experience for the offender when he makes amends for his wrongdoing. Things are made right and that is a powerful learning effect for a simple consequence.
- Parental disapproval— In the context of a loving parent-child relationship, parental disapproval is often the most motivating of consequences. When kids think to themselves why they should choose to not do something wrong, it's usually because their parent would disapprove, not because they will have to go to time-out. Parental disapproval does not mean shaming however, and it's good to keep in mind the adage to criticize the behavior, not the person.
- Removal of possessions such as TV, cell phone, use of house phone, computer, car, etc.— It hurts and it's meant to give the child the time to think about their misbehavior through a feeling of loss. That's why it's important to not allow the child to simply replace that possession with something else that is pleasurable. If they don't feel the loss, they don't learn the lesson. In cases of serious misbehavior that is not responding to consequences, removal of ALL possessions may be called for. In this case, children earn back their TV, computer, etc. through excellent behavior.
- Removal of privileges such as having a friend over, going on an outing— These are the short-term consequences that we give children when they misbehave. The common term is 'grounding'. Grounding is most effective when you follow the guidelines above. The child should be warned that they will be grounded if a specific misbehavior is repeated; it should be for a single outing or very short time period; and when it's given, you should follow through.
- Replacing a broken or lost object by earning money or working it off— Related to making amends, when a child damages or loses their own possession, the natural consequence is that they don't have it anymore. When it is someone else's possession, they should learn that restitution is the right thing to do. This isn't punishment, it's simply the way the world works.
- Saying 'I'm sorry'— Saying 'I'm sorry' feels like punishment to some of us, but what a valuable lesson we learn when we find forgiveness and reparation of a relationship through the words, 'I'm sorry.'
- Time-out— Time-out is a good consequence on a number of levels. It gives both of you a cooling-off period and avoids escalation to pointless, angry arguments. It is also a form of social isolation and as such, teaches that in order to participate in the

social group, you must follow certain social behaviors.

Mark

P.S. Be sure to watch ALL the Instructional Videos [online version of the eBook].

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:22AM (-08:00)

## Over-Indulgence vs. Accountability

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Hi J.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi Mark,

I have a decision to make and hope you can help me with it.

My son has his graduation trip next year booked and the balance payment of \$1300 is due now in order to keep the booking of the spot. Originally we agreed that each of us pays a half of the fee and I will reimburse him if he graduates. He paid a half for the initial payment, and I paid the full second payment because he did not have the money ready though he was working. So I told him he would pay the third payment all by himself and he didn't. It was an optional payment, so was left with the balance to be paid all together now.

He has not working since September for he planned he would study hard. He did not do that but goes to school every day and is not doing well, hit and miss with the passing.

I have been hoping that he would come to me and ask about it because he should worry about the balance payment. He hasn't. Shall I just pay it quietly?

==> Only if you want to continue to use an over-indulgent parenting style (the type of parenting that has contributed significantly to your current parent-child difficulties). I would suggest that you stick to the original agreement. If your son defaults on his part, then he chooses to lose the trip.

Shall I talk to him and then pays it? Shall I forget about it and lose the a few hundred already paid. The counselor we are seeing thinks that I should just pay for it and tell my son that he has been trying(because he goes to school every day). What shall I do and say to him? I feel stuck.

==> We always want to set-up situations at home that are representative of how the real world operates, and in the real world, if one does not live up to his end of the deal, the deal falls through.

Whenever you are in doubt about what to do in any particular situation, always ask

yourself, "Is the decision I'm about to make going to foster the development of self-reliance or dependency?"

If your decision will help foster self-reliance -- it is a good decision. If it will foster more dependency, then you should come up with a different plan.

Clearly, allowing your son to forget his part of the original deal will foster more dependency. The money you'll lose will be money well spent on teaching your son a valuable lesson.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:29AM (-08:00)

## He definitely has some ODD -ness...

Thursday, December 11, 2008

Hi Mark,

I recently joined your wonderful "help-net" by getting the Ebook and receiving more information from the chats, etc.

We started implementing assign. #1 and some of your other advisements. I've always tried to show unconditional love , but separate the "trust" issue. My husband's emotions ebb and flow - It seemed things were getting a little better with our son but in the last week, he chose to leave school without "permission" and has been asked not to return, it was a small Christian school and they don't have the adequate personnel to handle "problem" students.

Based on your information, he definitely has some ODD-ness and now I'm beginning to wonder about some type of learning disability as well. It seems like he's more manageable when schools out, than when it's in. I'm trying to get an appt. to get him evaluated for ESE testing, so I'll know whether to rule that out or not. With no family to assist, his sisters are grown and gone and living out west.

We've thought about sending him out there to live with them, but then , it's not there " responsibility " to raise him, it's ours. We don't like leaving him at home during the day, because we've always had the rule, no friends at our house, when nether parent there, but with us both working , there's noway to know if he's having friends over and unfortunately there aren't any " teen daycares" that I'm aware of.

I would appreciate any words of wisdom . Thank you so much for providing strength, support and hope for us "frazzled families, may the Lord continue to bless you efforts.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:10AM (-08:00)

# Teen Home Alone

Thursday, December 11, 2008

Both my husband and I work. Thus, our son is home alone during the day (after school). We cannot supervise him and have told him not to have any friends over while we are away. He violates this request regularly. Any advice?

.....

As dual-earner families have become the norm, the different kinds of 'time' kids spend with parents has become an important issue. I suggest that simple parental presence or absence is not necessarily the main problem for teens that are irresponsible with "home alone" time. Rather, it is the lack of trust between parent and teen.

All relationships are based on trust. Kids want and need to trust their parents. Parents want (and need) to trust their kids. Trust makes honest communication possible; it builds relational bridges; it gives meaning to our respective roles; it provides security; it stimulates responsibility and caring. If a teen never learns to trust, the results can be devastating.

"Trusting" must be learned. Even the world of psychology recognizes that kids are born without the ability to trust. Developmentally, kids learn to trust as they bond with their parents.

This is why the OPS program uses a two-pronged approach: assertive parenting (e.g., the 3-day discipline) alongside a steady diet of nurturing (e.g., catching kids doing things right).

For many families, broken trust is an ongoing cycle -- the teen lies, breaks curfew, experiments with drugs, or gets into trouble at school. The parents respond with guilt trips, threats to take away privileges, and violations of their teen's privacy. Both sides feel trust has been broken beyond repair.

Trust is a fundamental building block of parent-teen relationships, especially as kids develop into teenagers. In general, trust is broken when a parent or teen acts in a way that doesn't meet the other's expectations. Both parents and teens break the other's trust when they engage in outbursts or temper tantrums, guilt trips, or threats of any kind. Parents lose their teen's trust when they fail to set and enforce limits and when they resort to snooping or spying to learn about their teen's life.

Trust is a two-way street. In order to gain their parents' trust, teens have to demonstrate a pattern of trustworthy behavior. Every time a teen follows a rule or meets their parent's expectation, the baseline trust and respect expand. The key is remembering trust builds slowly and can be broken down easily. For every five times you do the right thing, it only takes one poor decision to undo the trust you've built.

Just as every teen wants to be trusted, every parent needs to earn their teen's trust. A parent builds trust every time he treats others with respect, follows through on a commitment or promise, or stands firm in setting and enforcing boundaries. This doesn't necessarily mean your kids will 'like' you or treat you like a friend. But trust has little to do with how much we like someone or their decisions. Rather, it is the firm belief in the

honesty and reliability of another person. That's what being a parent is all about - giving a teen what they need, not necessarily what they want.

Here are some steps parents can take to rebuild trust after it has been broken:

- Create a roadmap for success—Telling a teen to "act his age" or "do the right thing" won't give him the information he needs to win your trust. Instead, give him specific benchmarks that will help him meet your expectations. Explain that while behaviors like cursing, slamming doors, ignoring homework assignments, and talking back will diminish trust, behaviors like finishing chores on time, getting good grades, and calling to check in at a designated time will increase trust.

- Explain the benefits—When parents trust their teen, everyone benefits. Since teens tend to be somewhat self-absorbed, you may need to explain the concrete ways in which a trusting relationship will benefit your teen. For example, a teen may earn greater privileges like a later curfew, permission to drive the family car more often, more time with friends, or the freedom to go on that trip he has been planning. By explaining how trust is relevant to him, how it can make life at home more peaceful and supportive, and how it can improve his life in general, he's more likely to stay motivated to do the hard work.

- Give positive reinforcement—When your teen meets your expectations, verbally reinforce those positive behaviors by acknowledging his efforts. Show your appreciation with a simple "thank you" or pat on the back, and offer additional privileges and rewards as he becomes more trustworthy. By giving positive feedback, your teen sees that you, the parent, are willing to do the work, and he will feel encouraged to behave responsibly. Remember, there will always be bumps in the road to rebuilding trust. The family may be making progress and suddenly something happens to break trust down again. The ups and downs are all important parts of the process, and even small failures can result in stronger bonds. Sometimes teens need to take one step back before taking the next step forward. For the family's sake, both parents and teens need to be willing to try and try again.

- Open the lines of communication—Ask your teen open-ended questions about what trust is, how it was broken, and what steps can be taken to rebuild those bonds. Rather than assuming everyone knows what trust is, decide collectively on a family definition of trust, try to understand each other's perspective, and clear up any misunderstandings up front. Families should discuss the fact that trust is a two-way street and that both parent and teen have responsibilities in the process of reconnecting. As the family negotiates the rules and boundaries, schedule regular meetings to discuss your progress and evaluate any setbacks.

- Trust yourself—Parents are in the best position to know what's right for their kids. Even if both parent and teen are working hard to rebuild trust, both parties must set reasonable expectations of themselves and others. Trust grows slowly, piece by piece, with every good decision that is made. Trust-building is not an end in and of itself. It is an ongoing process of renegotiation and personal and collective growth that is required in every relationship. With communication, patience, and a little faith, you can replace past hurts with loving bonds and hope for a more fulfilling relationship.

Good luck,

Mark

## My Out-of-Control Teen

.....  
You always make so much sense, as far as I'm concerned you're the "the new Dr. Phil." I have told numerous people about you, even my friend who is a family therapist.

We try to be logical, as opposed to emotional , but sometimes it's hard. Your " voice of reason " brings us back and helps put things in perspective with our son.

Can't thank you enough !!!

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:01AM (-08:00)

## The Insidiousness of Over-Indulgence

Thursday, December 11, 2008

Adult consequences that result when one has been raised by an over-indulgent parent—

- Attitude toward life: Self-indulgent, bored, apathetic, restless, no initiative.
- Attitude toward others: Passive expectation of getting from others.
- Attitude toward sex/marriage: Attaches to partners who indulge him. May use attractiveness or pretend weakness.
- Attitude toward work: Expects them to anticipate his wishes. Hates to work. Can't find a job. No career decisions, no preparation, or persistence.

As these adults were growing up, here's what happened:

They were given their freedom to choose and decide for themselves. They were not given much, if any, discipline or rules. Their parents were very loving and nurturing, but had great difficulty saying "no" and setting limits.

Children with this parenting style tend to have more behavioral problems as adults.

Common traits among these children when they grow up:

- Cannot maintain employment or constantly moves from job to job
- Has a strong dependence on alcohol, substances or negative habits
- Has trouble with significant other relationships (possible multiple divorces)
- Immature
- Selfish
- Spoiled
- Take advantage of friends, family, coworkers, etc.
- Uncaring

My Spoiled Teenager

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:01AM (-08:00)

## These are difficult kids...

Friday, December 12, 2008

Hi Mark,

Thanks for your reply re things worsening again at home. As far as can tell we are doing about 95% of the things you suggest but I will concede we do miss a thing here and there on reflection. M\_\_\_ gave her some money (\$1) the other day because they had gone down to the sea with friends and were jumping off the local pier which was a bit high. The other dad said to his kids that if they were brave and jumped off, he would give them some money so then A\_\_\_ wanted some and M\_\_\_ gave in (she did jump off). I got a bit cross but he said she'd earned it-I disagreed because I thought what she was doing was not actually work.

I am saying no to EVERY request for a material item or privilege and (as you suggest) telling her how she can earn the item whereas M\_\_\_ I feel is not taking it all to the "nth" degree and she is trying to take hold of the reins again. After a particularly bad week of disrespect and aggravation, I suspended her allowance but have re-instated it as the behavior has improved. She is still not too enthusiastic about chores but is doing some here and there.

I must admit my poker face is perhaps a little strained after a long day and she is possibly seeing how much I can take...I guess I didn't realise that even a tiny slip-up here and there would herald a big relapse... These are difficult kids.

With regard to your ADHD inquiry about A\_\_\_, I have not had her formally assessed, it was just a feeling I had about her because she is inattentive, hyperactive and immature. I was hoping to avoid medication and try behavior modification in the first instance and your website and e-book appealed to me for these reasons. I listen to your cds in the car a lot and will get back on the computer if we can't get back on track. Thanks for your time!

L.

.....

Hi L.,

You are indeed a good student and a good parent -- and I appreciate as well as honor that. If I haven't told you before, parents like you give me the inspiration to continue in this line of work.

I have a feeling that you never get too far off track with these parenting strategies. I also have a hunch that you are back on full course now.

And yes ...the intense child brings a whole new meaning to the term "parenting difficulties."

Stay in touch,

Mark



My Out-of-Control Teen  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:48AM (-08:00)

## Her grades have gone from B's to F's...

Friday, December 12, 2008

My 15 year old daughter has had years worth of problems being accepted by her peers (she was diagnosed with ADHD at age 12). This past summer, she earned enough money to buy her own cell phone and pays a monthly fee for unlimited texting. Her grades have gone from B's to F's. I think she has become addicted to the constant source of contact with peers (regardless of if it is worthwhile, supportive, etc. or not). While I do not micromanage her school work, I have tried to provide incentive. For example, she was told that she could not get her drivers permit without having a 3.0 average. I had her pay for 1/2 of the classroom drivers ed program, but by the time she was 15 1/2 and could get her permit, her grades were all failing and I did not allow her to get the permit until her grades are back to a 3.0. She is continuing to not show any motivation to do anything in her classes. She frequently does not do homework, fails tests and hands in things incomplete, because she says she is busy or too tired. ????? Any suggestions? Thank you!

.....

Hi Mary,

You are still trying to "manage" her academic performance (by withholding driving privileges and trying to provide incentives).

Whenever you are in doubt about what decision to make, always ask yourself, "Will this foster self-reliance – or dependency in my child?" Clearly, disallowing her to get a driving permit -- and then her license -- fosters dependency (i.e., she has to depend on others for transportation).

It will be helpful for all concerned for you to stop taking ownership of her education – and allow her to get that permit.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:45AM (-08:00)

## Teens & Money Management

Friday, December 12, 2008

Your adolescent will benefit from your help in learning money-management skills. The earlier a adolescent is held accountable for staying within a reasonable budget, the better the chance of avoiding financial catastrophe when he or she leaves the nest.

Guiding your adolescent to good money-management practices is not difficult if you take it step by step. These steps include setting priorities, setting a budget and opening a checking account.

### Prioritizing—

1. List your basic daily needs—all the things that your parents expect you to pay for out of allowance and/or income from a job.
2. List those needs in order of importance.
3. Review the list daily.
4. Meet the highest priority needs first.

### Setting Up a Budget—

1. Determine a time span for your budget-weekly, biweekly, monthly.
2. List income from all sources-allowance, jobs, gifts.
3. List all expenses-car payments, snacks, entertainment, personal care items, clothes, savings account-and add the amounts. You might have to do some research into cost of various items if you are just beginning to pay for them.
4. List debts, if any, and add it to the expense total.
5. Subtract the expense total from the income total.
6. Consider your budget guidelines before spending any money so you can stay within your budget.

If your adolescent does not have a checking account, now might be a good time to have him or her set one up.

### Opening a Checking Account—

1. Choose a bank, considering the fees and special programs of several institutions to make a decision.
2. Take official identification, credit information, current account information and money to deposit to the bank.
3. Ask to talk with an account officer.
4. Fill out an application, and answer any questions.
5. Choose the checking account that will best meet your needs.
6. Ask about charges for using the account and penalties for overdrafts.
7. Read and save all information about the account.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:55AM (-08:00)

## Teens & Porn

Sunday, December 14, 2008

I discovered new behavior today. Last night I heard my son coming home at 1:30 after mid-night. I got up at 3:30 and found he was in the family room lying on the couch sleeping with his jeans pulled down with his underwear exposed. He woke up and saw me and the first thing he did was to look at the TV screen (used as the computer monitor) that was not powered off. Then he tried to pull up his jeans. This morning I was using the computer and noticed what was last left on the screen last use. My son was watching teen sex video downloaded from a porn website. He did not log off his account after watching it, so he would know that I knew about this once he sees that I have used the computer today. What shall I do with this new area of his behavior? Shall I attend the

matter or not? How do I do it if I shall?

.....

With the advent of the Internet, moms & dads are finding it increasingly difficult to shield their kids from pornography. Now, in addition to the exposure kids might encounter from classmates who borrowed one of their father's magazines, most school-age kids and teenagers are spending large amounts of time online for homework or entertainment reasons. Attorney General John Ashcroft has estimated that nine in ten teens have been exposed to pornography. Unfortunately, many of these teens are susceptible to developing addictions or compulsions to these images.

The term "addict" may seem severe. Most moms & dads will initially minimize the problem, hoping their son or daughter is simply "experimenting." Experience has taught me that, in many cases, at least one of the moms & dads will have faced similar struggles when he or she was younger. Today, however, Internet pornography is the fast ramp to sex addiction. Coupled with a greater moral decay in the culture and the fact that kids's minds are still in the process of developing to maturity, addiction can happen quicker than we moms & dads like to think.

In many situations, the first reaction is to determine who is to blame within the family. It is important to realize, however, that bad things still happen to good families. This does not absolve certain parties from taking responsibility where it is needed. Everyone needs to take ownership of his or her piece of the puzzle.

For example, moms & dads need to ask if they have provided comprehensive sex education. Moms & dads will also want to re-evaluate the types and amounts of media they have allowed in the home. People tend to absorb the messages that bombard them in popular media -- more so with teens and young kids. What have your kids been listening to and watching? Are their media reinforcing respectful messages about sexuality and the dignity of the person, or is it working to erode these foundational principles in your youngster's mind?

Another often-overlooked problem is the sad reality of sex abuse. Most sex addicts have suffered sexual abuse at some point in their lives, and treatment of sex abuse is foundational to overcoming sex addiction.

Moms & dads will also want to re-evaluate the types and amounts of media they have allowed in the home. People tend to absorb the messages that bombard them in popular media -- more so with teens and young kids.

The teenager addict also has areas of responsibility. Has he or she been honest about the sexual struggles? Have there been other excesses like alcohol or drugs? Has a peer or perhaps an adult been a bad influence? Most important of all, has the teenager made a full disclosure to his moms & dads so that the family can become equipped to deal with sex addiction?

Moms & dads need to realize that their teen is likely suffering from extreme shame and embarrassment. Authoritarian dictates are not likely to encourage your youngster to open up and share the extent of his or her struggles. Compassionate love and understanding, such as Jesus demonstrated to the woman caught in adultery, is likely to help your youngster feel safe enough to disclose the full story.

Many families will already have experienced serious communication breakdown with their teens. How moms & dads approach their teen in this situation will likely determine whether unhealthy patterns of communications will continue to disrupt and frustrate the relationship or whether a new foundation of openness, trust, and safety can be built and sustained throughout the struggle.

Moms & dads will need to remind themselves that they are often prone to minimizing what they know or suspect to be the truth. Moms & dads also need to realize the resistance they will encounter from their teen. Most addicts, regardless of age, will deny their struggle. They may even shift the blame and become verbally aggressive. Others may agree immediately that they have sinned or hurt others, and promise too quickly that they will never do it again. Getting caught hardly changes the heart.

Of course, it's to be expected that everyone will feel awkward, maybe even embarrassed. Regardless of the discomfort, however, when there is evidence of illicit sexual behavior and possible addiction, moms & dads have to take the lead.

Chances are this encounter will exacerbate personality differences already evident in the family, but moms & dads and teen alike need to understand that this issue is not about personalities but about principles. Ideally, moms & dads will have educated their kids about the principles or core values that pertain to personal integrity. When these principles are violated, moms & dads don't need to make this a personal issue, even though the wound will be highly personal.

Those who have not undertaken this core training will experience greater difficulty reaching the teen. Compounding the problem will be any moral lapse or habits that the teen witnesses in the moms & dads' lives. It is extremely difficult to admonish a youngster for seeking out pornography if the moms & dads have a few CDs they claim to be marital aids. Kids are experts at sniffing out hypocrisy.

If moms & dads are morally compromised in this situation, there are only a few choices they can make. They can either let the matter drop, thus resigning their teen to a cycle of pain, shame and addiction, or they can make the decision to eliminate those harmful aspects of their own lives and work toward bringing healing and restoration to the entire family.

Youth culture often counters parental values; teenagers may claim the right to express sexuality in whatever ways they desire. Without moral absolutes, they are prone to experimentation and believe that being true to one's self is the greater good.

The fact remains that moms & dads are responsible to a large degree for their kids and for what their kids do. For example, when an teenager violates one or more civil laws pertaining to sexual conduct, his moms & dads will typically become involved in the court hearings as well. Taking up their moral responsibility, moms & dads of teenage addicts will need to state clear boundaries so that the guidelines and consequences are obvious.

Sadly, simply stating clear moral guidelines won't change the heart of our kids. Nevertheless, moms & dads should be clear. Teenagers are to be accountable for their conduct, especially when trust has been violated.

Some initial guidelines for kids would involve the types of media they are exposed to and

the times and places of exposure. For example, moms & dads would want to regulate Internet usage to specific times of the day or only when they are present. They may need specialized software to help them achieve these measures. Other restrictions could include limiting Internet use for homework purposes only and limiting TV viewing.

Heavy-handedness without appropriate ongoing communication and relationship can drive a teen further away from you and drive a continuation of his or her acting out.

The guidelines moms & dads set should not be limited to media in the home. Considering the seriousness of your youngster's problem, guidelines should also be developed for conduct outside the household, with a signed agreement clearly stating consequences for infractions.

The reader can see how this could easily become a case of "parenting with an iron fist." These measures need to be moderated by your family's situation and your unique relationships. Above all, you must enter into these measures making sure that you are acting out of love and a motivation to help your youngster toward healing. Just as important, your youngster must perceive that you are acting with such a motivation. Heavy-handedness without appropriate ongoing communication and relationship can drive a teen further away from you and drive a continuation of his or her acting out.

Ideally, fathers should discuss these matters with sons, and mothers with daughters. Follow-up is important and, at least initially, these times of accountability may need to occur daily so that the teenage addict can check-in.

The most difficult question that can emerge is how to safeguard other kids in the home. We want to think the best of our loved ones, regardless of age. It's hard to imagine that a family member may actually pose a hazard to another family member. Where sex addiction exists, however, a careful evaluation for risk factors is always warranted.

Understandably, moms & dads will want to protect younger kids from the knowledge that an older sibling is addicted to pornography or other sexual behaviors. In fact, many times, the younger kids remain relatively innocent, and perhaps the moms & dads have not yet initiated sex education. Nevertheless, there are times when moms & dads will need to err on the side of caution, and share with younger kids that an older sibling is in trouble sexually, and therefore, won't be left alone in their presence without parental supervision.

Professional help will be critically important if your youngster struggles with pornography or act outs sexually in other ways. Often, moms & dads seek the help of a pastor, a counselor, or perhaps someone from school. While all of these people have key-support roles to play, most likely none are specialized in the treatment of sex abuse and/or addiction.

The specialist can equip you to know how to approach your youngster. You will also learn how to monitor the situation, and develop more or less support depending on your particular circumstances.

Just because your teenager seems to be addicted today to pornography does not mean that he or she must remain addicted tomorrow. Kids of all ages are incredible resilient, especially when their legitimate needs are being met in meaningful ways.

If your teenager is diagnosed with sex addiction, it means this condition did not occur

overnight. To some degree, there has been a progression that most likely dates back to the first time your youngster was exposed to pornography or some other form of sexual abuse.

Because our kids are in various stages of development where some degree of sexual experimentation is likely, it can be difficult to pin down whether or not a serious problem actually exists. The secrecy that surrounds sexual sin also makes it difficult to detect what may be happening in the private lives of our kids.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:33AM (-08:00)

## Top Parenting Websites - 2009

Sunday, December 14, 2008

4 ADHD  
AAC Intervention  
ABA Educational Resources  
Able Generation  
Able Net  
Ability Hub  
The Access Center  
Accessibility in Education  
Access World  
The Adaptive Child  
Adaptive Technology Resource Center  
ADD Resources  
ADHD News  
AllerNeeds  
The Alliance for Technology Access  
All Kids Can  
All Kinds of Minds  
All Learners  
American Printing House for the Blind  
American Sign Language  
American Society for Deaf Children  
Apraxia Kids  
The Arc  
Arcess  
Ashley's Mom, Inc  
ASL Info  
Asperger Syndrome OASIS  
Assistive Technology: Enabling Dreams  
Assistive Technology Training Online  
AssistiveWare  
Association for Comprehensive NeuroTherapy  
Attention Deficit Disorder Association  
Audiblox  
Autism Research Institute  
Autism Society of America  
Autism Speaks

A-Z Deafblindness  
Bandaides and Blackboards  
Beyond a Peanut  
Bibliotherapy  
BrailleMaster  
Brain Injury in Children  
Brave Kids  
Bridges 4 Kids  
Bright Hub  
Bright Word  
Center for Applied Special Technology  
Cerebral Palsy  
Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation  
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder  
Closing the Gap  
Conduct Disorders  
ConnSENSE Bulletin  
Cornucopia of Disability Information  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Davidson Institute for Talent Development  
Different Just Like Me  
Different Roads to Learning  
Disability Resources  
Disability Resources Monthly  
Disabilities Unlimited  
The Disability Rights Movement  
Disabled World  
DORE  
Dyslexia Teacher  
Dyslexia the Gift  
Dyslexia Treatment Centre  
Edbydesign  
Educating People With Disabilities  
The Educator's Reference Desk  
Enable Mart  
Enabling Devices  
Enabling Technologies  
Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders  
Ergo Guys  
Eutactics  
Family Center on Technology and Disability  
Family Village  
First Signs  
Friends Like You  
Help Me Talk Right  
IBM Accessibility Center  
I Love Speech and Language  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
International Society on Early Intervention  
Intervention Central  
Introduction to Epilepsy  
Irlen Institute

J. P. Das Developmental Disabilities Centre  
Juvenile Arthritis in the Classroom  
Keeping Pace  
Helen Keller Foundation  
Keystone Blind Association  
KidSign  
Kids with Food Allergies  
Landmark School Outreach  
LD Online  
LD Pride  
Learning Disabilities  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Learning Disabilities from NIMH  
Lekotek  
Let's Play Projects  
LinguiSystems  
MaxiAids  
MCAS Alternate Assessment Resources  
Meeting Street  
Misunderstood Minds  
My Out-of-Control Child  
My Web My Way  
National Association of Parents with Children in Special Education  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Center on Educational Outcomes  
National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum  
National Center to Improve Practice  
National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities  
National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center  
National Institute of Mental Health  
National Resource Center on ADHD  
A Neurological Basis for ADHD  
New York Higher Education Support Center for Systems Change  
NLD on the Web  
Nonverbal Learning Disorders Association  
Not My Kid  
Oppositional Defiance Disorder  
OSERS  
Our Kids  
Outside the Box!  
PCI Education  
Phonic Ear  
Pine Tree Society  
Play Attention  
Reactive Attachment Disorder  
Reading Made Easy  
Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic  
Rehab Tool  
The Resource Room  
Resources for the Hearing Impaired  
Sensory Integration Exercises  
SERI



Signing Time  
Sign Writing  
Simple Ways to Help Children with Special Needs  
Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities  
Social Thinking  
The Source  
Speaking of Speech  
Special Education News  
Special Needs Corner  
Special Needs Family Fun  
Special Needs Ideas and Resources  
Special Needs Opportunity Window  
Special Needs Toys  
Speech Language Pathology Web Sites  
Speech Teach UK  
Speech Therapy Activities  
Speech Therapy Games  
James Stanfield  
Start Learning American Sign Language  
Stuttering Foundation of America  
Super Surfin' for Special Educators  
Teaching Strategies  
Texthelp Systems  
Through Your Eyes  
TinyEYE Online Speech Therapy  
The Total Transformation  
Using Technology to Support Diverse Learners  
Very Special Home Pages  
Web Accessibility in Mind  
What Kind of World Do You Want?  
The Word Isolator  
Wrightslaw  
Your Child With Learning Difficulties 123 Kidz Area  
2 SMRT 4U  
4 Parents Network  
4 Sitters  
10 Basic Manners for Kids  
10 Tips For Good Study Skills  
1888 Toys  
ABC Home Preschool  
ABC Parenting  
About Our Kids  
Activities for Kids  
Activities to Build Math Skills  
Adult Learn  
Adult Learning Activities  
Advice for Parents  
AllKids  
The Anti-Drug  
Ashley's Mom, Inc.  
At Home with Math  
Au Pair Site

Baby Chatter  
Baby Checklist  
Baby Name Meanings and Origins  
Baby Names  
Baby Names and Meanings  
Baby Names Country  
Baby Names Garden  
Baby's Development  
Bereavement Centers for Children  
Better Behavior Wheel  
Birthday Party Ideas  
Boarding School Review  
Boopadoo  
Born Learning  
Call Your Pediatrician  
Cape Cod Parent and Child  
Caring for Kids  
CaringBridge  
Car Travel Games  
Child and Family Policy Consulting and Publishing  
Child and Family Web Guide  
A Child Becomes a Reader  
ChildCare Avenue  
Child Development Institute  
Child Fun  
Child Product Safety  
Children and Separation/Divorce  
Children Grieve, Too  
Children's Birthday Parties  
Children's Health  
Children's Party  
Children's Trust Fund  
CollegeBug  
¡COLORÍN colorado!  
Combatting Summer Brain Drain  
Common Sense Media  
Content Watch  
Coolest Homemade Costumes  
Coolmath 4 Parents  
Countdown to Kindergarten  
Countdown to Kindergarten Activities  
Crabbie Masters  
The Creativity Institute  
Cute Baby Names  
The CyberTipline  
Daycare Bear  
Daycare Hotline  
The Daycare Resource Connection  
Department of Education Publications  
Different Roles You Play as a Mom  
Directory Kids  
Directory of Education

Disaster Prep 101  
Discovery Education  
Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative  
Early Math  
Easy Fun School  
Educating Jane  
Education: An Education and Child Development Site for Parents  
Educational Toys 4 Kids  
Educational Toys Planet  
Eduguide  
E-Mail for Kids  
Embracing the Child  
eNannySource  
Enlighten Me PTA  
Everyday Mathematics Parent Connection  
Everyday Math for Parents  
Facts for Families  
Families Exploring Science and Math  
Family Adventures with Math and Science  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
Family and Relationships  
Family Communications  
Family Day  
Family Education  
Family Food Zone  
Family Fun  
FamilyIQ  
Family Onwards  
Family Read-Aloud  
Family TLC  
Family Watchdog  
Fatherville  
Finding a Nanny  
First Day of School  
Focus on Your Child  
Food for Tots  
Fundraising IP  
Fund Raising Ideas Center  
The Future of Children  
Games Kids Can Play Now  
Georec  
Get Net Wise  
Get Ready for Kindergarten  
Girl Birthday Party Ideas  
GotKids Network  
Grannies United  
Great Schools  
Growing Up Healthy Expert Advice  
The Guidance Channel  
Head Lice  
Head Lice Prevention  
Health and Human Services

Healthy School Lunches  
Helping Children Succeed in School  
Helping Your Child Become a Reader  
Helping Your Child Learn  
Helping Your Child Learn Math  
Helping Your Child Learn to Read  
Home Family Network  
Homeschool Curriculum  
HomeSchool Dads  
Home Schooling Plus  
House of Links  
How to Clean Stuff  
Ideas for Helping Your Child with Reading  
Ideas for the Kids  
iD Tech Camps  
iKeepSafe  
I Love Schools  
Internet Safety For Our Children's Sake  
iParenting  
Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?  
It's Not Your Fault  
Jelly Mom  
The Jenna Druck Foundation  
Kaboose  
Kajeet  
Keep Kids Healthy  
Kid-Friendly Cooking  
Kid Labels  
Kidoinfo  
Kids' Birthday Party Guide  
Kids' Camps  
Kids Can Travel  
Kids' Health  
Kids in St. Louis  
Kids' Party Games  
Kids Together  
Kids Travel 2  
Kidz Music Box CD's  
Kidz Privacy  
Kindergarten Readiness Checklist  
Live and Learn  
Latchkey Kids  
Local School Directory  
Mannerisms  
Massachusetts State PTA  
Math and Reading Help for Kids  
MD Junction  
Media Awareness Network  
Metro Daycare  
Military Homefront  
Missing Children  
Mom Ready

Mom's Minivan  
Moms Network  
Moms on Edge  
Money 4 College 123  
Mother Goose Programs  
My Babysitter  
My Boarding School  
My Child Playhouses  
My Create-A-Book  
My First Day Video  
My Reward Board  
National Center for Family Literacy  
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
National PTA  
National Youth Network  
NetSafeKids  
The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale  
Nibbles  
NineBlue Family Travel Guides  
No Child Left Behind  
Not My Kid  
Older Child Adoption  
The Old Schoolhouse Magazine  
Our Family Wizard  
PapaJan  
Parentbooks  
Parent Bytes  
Parenting E-Books  
Parenting for a Literate Community  
Parenting iVillage  
Parenting Journals  
Parenting News  
Parenting Priorities  
Parenting Site  
Parent Resources  
Parents and Children Together Online  
The Parents Centre  
Parents, Children, and Technologies  
Parents' Choice Foundation  
A Parent's Guide to Fire Safety for Babies and Toddlers  
A Parent's Guide to Online Kids  
A Parent's Guide to Promoting Reading in Children  
The Parent's Journal  
Parents Magazine  
Parents' Music Room  
Parents' Place  
ParentsTalk  
Party Game Central  
PAYjr  
PBS Parents  
PeaTot  
Pediatric On Call

Phil's Place  
Phone a Babysitter  
A Place of Our Own  
Planet Bravo Techno-tainment Camp  
Play and Learn Family Activities  
Practical Money Skills for Life  
Preparing for Kindergarten  
PrivateBug  
Private School Directory  
Private School Review  
Public School Review  
PTO Today  
Rad Road Trips  
Raising Digital Kids  
Raising Our Kids  
Raising Readers  
Reading is Fundamental  
Reading Magic  
Ready For Life  
Safe Kids  
Safe Kids Canada  
Scholastic Parents  
SchoolBug  
School Family Nights  
School Matters  
The Sibling Connection  
Sites for Parents  
Sites to Help Parents Help Their Children  
SittersSearch  
Sizzlin' Summer Science  
Sleep Disorders  
Smarter Kids  
Smart Television Alliance  
SOAR  
Special Needs Family Fun  
Summer Camp  
Summer Computer Camp  
Summertime Funtime Activities  
Surf Net Parents  
Talking with Kids about War  
Teach Your Children Well  
Think Baby Names  
Tide Fabric Advisor  
Time Travelers Today  
Tiny Tot Lot  
Tips for Online Safety  
Total Mom  
Toys to Trade  
Travel for Kids  
Troubled With  
Tufts University Child and Family Web Guide  
Tutor Hunt

Tutors 4 Me UK  
UPromise  
Very Best Kids  
Web Aware  
Web Wise Kids  
What's for Dinner?  
Wow Dad!  
You Can Handle Them All  
Your Child's Daycare  
Your Child With Learning Difficulties  
Private Schools in Canada

<http://loveathome.com>--This website focuses on families that have more than two children.

<http://www.collegesavings.org>--This website includes information about 529 savings plans.

<http://www.drtoy.com>-- Need to buy a gift for a child? This website provides information and reviews on the best toys and educational products. It also offers tips on selecting and links to online toy stores.

<http://www.more4kids.info/>--This website is chock-full of articles on any aspect of parenting you can think of and for any age. Whether you're nursing an infant, potty-training a toddler, helping a third-grader with homework, or buying a cell phone for a teenager, this website has advice and ideas to help you out.

<http://www.parentsworld.com/>--This website has articles and resources for single parents.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/>--This website focuses on babies and toddlers up to age three. Its parenting section includes articles on nutrition, brain development, child care, sleep, and more.

These websites focus on education and childcare issues for your children:

<http://www.pta.org/>

<http://www.naeyc.org>

<http://www.nea.org/parents>

<http://www.nncc.org/>

These websites focus on specific discipline techniques. You can also find discipline articles on general parenting websites:

<http://www.ultimateparenting.com/>

<http://www.howtobehave.com/>

These websites provide advice and information for stepparents:

<http://step-parenting.com>

<http://www.stepfamily.org/>

We all need help navigating the media choices available to our children today. These websites review movies, television shows, video games, and music to help us determine what is appropriate for our children:

<http://www.parentpreviews.com/>

<http://www.parentstv.org>

<http://www.family-movie-reviews.com/>

<http://www.common sense media.org>

Parenting teenagers brings a whole new set of issues and questions. These websites have articles and advice on everything from communication and curfews to drug use and internet safety:

<http://www.parentingteens.com/>

<http://www.parent-teen.com/>

<http://www.safeteens.com/>

Your favorite parenting magazines also have websites with articles, recipes, craft ideas, and more:

<http://familyfun.go.com/>

<http://www.ParentsforParentsMag.com>

<http://www.parents.com/>

These websites have a little bit of everything – printables for the kids, recipes, parenting articles for all ages, a message board, and more:

<http://www.familyeducation.com/>

<http://www.parentsoup.com>

<http://www.parenthood.com>

<http://www.tnpc.com/>

These are the websites to go to if you have questions about your child's health. They have articles about nutrition, fitness, general health, growth and development, and more:

<http://www.familydoctor.org>

<http://www.kidshealth.org/>



<http://pediatrics.about.com/>

<http://www.aap.org/>

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:25AM (-08:00)

## We do have a situation in hour house...

Monday, December 15, 2008

Hi Mark,

Thank you for contacting me, I am currently reading the book. We have taken a chapter to work with my son. So far we have been able to remove the TV from his room as consequence to fixing the door that he broke (during one of his outrages). He is working to catch up with his school work. He had failed the 9th grade once already and he is taking 9th and 10th grade classes right now. So we will definitely use the material as you may tell we do have a situation in hour house.

Thank you again.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:16AM (-08:00)

## Dictionary for Dads

Monday, December 15, 2008

Hello,

I would like to introduce you to [www.DictionaryforDads.com](http://www.DictionaryforDads.com) . Having experienced many dilemmas as a father of three I made a very clear assessment that there is very little quality literature available for dads today. Our roles as fathers at times become so complex and I personally could have used some direction. Our websites' primary goal is to assist fathers in raising healthy and happy children and nurturing a great relationship with them. As per statistics 50 percent of marriages fail and we address issues as it pertains to Fathers Rights, Custody, and How to Discuss and Protect our Children Through The Divorce Process.

Dictionary for Dads arose amid concerns of every day fathers who sought to promote their knowledge, education ,experience and resources as it pertains to becoming an excellent father. As an organization our goal is to assist Dad's in raising happy healthy children.

Our belief is that Dictionary for Dad's will provide resources and information which will be fundamental in helping men make informed decisions based on education, research and practical experience all provided by Dictionary for Dad's. In doing so this will not only reinforce the male role model in our society it will increase the social welfare of children throughout the world.

We understand that parenting is often complex and confusing with many variables including but not limited to nutrition, medical, psychological, developmental, environmental, marital, social and academic. It is our aim to provide every dad with education, information and resources for all dilemmas when they occur.

Dictionary for Dad's believes that the label of a "dad" is one which is earned not one that is provided through birth. If you like the site feel free to add us as a link.

Sincerely,

Robert Livingstone-516-398-1934

Kevin Beirne, MS, CSW

Psychotherapist NYS License#054939

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:25AM (-08:00)

## Top Publishers of Children's Books - 2009

Monday, December 15, 2008

Action Factor  
Bare Books  
Benchmark Education  
BestQuest  
Big Words  
Blue Rectangle  
Brain Building Toys  
Bright Ring  
Bungalo Books  
Buttonweed Press  
Candlewick Press  
Carson-Dellosa  
Cascade Pass  
Cedar Valley Publishing  
Charlesbridge  
Chicken House  
Children's Software Press  
Chronicle Books  
Compassion Books  
Continental Press  
Core Knowledge  
Corwin Press  
Creative Teaching Press  
Crystal Springs Books  
Culham Writing  
Curriculum Associates  
Dedicated Teacher  
Delta Education

Didax  
Dorling Kindersley  
Draw Write Now  
Educational Insights  
Educators Publishing Service  
ETA/Cuisenaire  
Evan-Moor  
Everyday Math  
FableVision  
Franklin Electronic Publishing  
Free Spirit Publishing  
FTC Publishing  
Foundations  
Golden Books  
Go Phonics  
Great Source  
Green Monster Learning  
Grow Publications  
Harcourt  
Harper Collins  
High Interest Publishing  
Hollister Kids  
Houghton Mifflin  
I Can Read!  
Illumination Arts  
Kamishibai for Kids  
Keep Books  
Kendall/Hunt  
Ladybird  
Landmark Editions  
Leap Frog School House  
Learning Media  
Learning Wrap-Ups  
LEGO Shop  
Lintor  
Literacy Wings  
Little, Brown and Company  
Live Wire Media  
Lulu  
Macmillan/McGraw-Hill  
Maupin House  
McDougall Littell  
McGuffey Eclectic Readers  
Milkweed Editions  
MindWare  
Mitten Press  
Mondo Publishing  
Music Expressions  
Nerdy Books  
Nixon Education Services  
Pacific Learning  
Pearson Learning

Peel Productions  
Penguin Group  
Perfection Learning  
Pokeweed Press  
Popet  
Power-Glide  
Primary Concepts  
Professional Associates  
Prufrock Press  
Puffin Books  
Random House  
Recorded Books  
Rock 'N Learn  
Roylco  
Sadlier-Oxford  
Salariya Book Company  
Scholastic  
Scott Foresman  
Seedling  
Simon and Schuster  
Singapore Math  
Singlish  
Social Studies School Service  
Solution Tree  
Spanish Children's Books  
SpeedRead  
SRA  
Steck-Vaughn  
Stenhouse  
STEPS  
Sundance  
Sunshine Books  
Sylvan Dell  
Teach Bright  
Teaching State Standards  
TLS Books  
Touch Math  
Trend Enterprises  
Triumph Learning  
TrollCarnival  
Usborne Books  
Wilbooks  
WonderBrains  
Wright Group  
Young Explorers  
Zaner-Bloser

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:38AM (-08:00)

## Top Websites for Children's Software - 2009

Monday, December 15, 2008

2+2 Math for Kids  
ABA Materials  
Academic Superstore  
Acqualia  
Adobe  
Assistiveware  
Audacity  
Blender 3D  
Brigadoon  
Building Blocks  
Bumper Car  
CCV Software  
Children's Software Online  
Class One  
Class Mate  
Core Learning  
Crick  
Dataworks  
Digital Frog  
Disney Interactive Learning  
Dr. Geo  
Educational Fontware  
Edutaining Kids  
ELR Software  
Everyone Can Read  
1st Class GradeBook  
Fast Rabbit  
FlexiMusic  
Flix Productions  
Form Wild  
Freeverse  
GAMCO Educational Software  
GenevaLogic  
Get a Clue  
Global Software  
Gnarly Math  
Gradekeeper  
Her Interactive  
Hot Potatoes  
Hungry Frog  
HyperStudio

## Individual Learning

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:40AM (-08:00)

Inspiration

IntelliTools

Interlex

Don Johnston

Key Curriculum Press

Kiddix

KidsBrowser

Kids GoGoGo

Kids Voyager

Kid Widget

KidZui

Knowledge Adventure

LameBrain

Leap Into Learning

The Learning Box

The Learning Company

Learning in Motion

The Learning Team

Lexia

Little Fingers

Mackiev

Macromedia

Math Facts Now

Mayer-Johnson

Micrograms

MicroWorlds

NeoOffice

Net Logo

The Neuron Farm

Notable Computer Software for Children

Ohio Distinctive

Pathos

Pearson Knowledge Technologies

Pencil Pete's Handwriting Program

Picasa

Pixelmator

Planet CD-ROM

Preschool Prep

Problem Pictures

Quiz Buddy

The Quiz Press  
Red Schoolhouse  
Renaissance Learning  
RJ Cooper and Associates  
RM Educational Software  
Rocket Reader  
Rocket Spanish  
Rocky Mountain Learning Systems  
Scholastic Technology Guide  
Sheppard  
SmartDraw  
Software Express  
Software For  
Software For Kids  
Special Needs Software  
Sprysoft  
Tom Snyder  
Spector  
Star Logo  
Star Logo TNG: The Next Generation  
Sunburst  
Tech 4 Learning  
Thomson Education  
Toads End Software  
Tool Factory  
Transparent Language  
Typing for Kids Software Review  
Vicomsoft  
Visions Technology in Education  
Viva-Media  
WiggleWorks  
Wireless Generation  
Word Games  
Word Whacker  
X2 Development Corporation  
YO Knowledge



## Top Websites for Gifted Children - 2009

Monday, December 15, 2008

[American Association for Gifted Children](#)  
[Articles from Gifted Child Today](#)  
[The Association for the Gifted](#)  
[Austega's Gifted Resource Centre](#)  
[The Brain of a Genius](#)  
[Bright vs. Gifted: Is There a Difference?](#)  
[California Association for the Gifted](#)  
[Center for Applied Motivation](#)  
[Center for Gifted Education](#)  
[Center for Gifted Education Policy](#)  
[Davidson Institute for Talent Development](#)  
[Developing Mathematical Talent: They Don't Have to Be Bored to Tears](#)  
[A Different Place](#)  
[Duke Gifted Letter](#)  
[@nrich](#)  
[Enrichment](#)  
[Genius Denied](#)  
[Gifted and High Ability](#)  
[Gifted and LD](#)  
[Gifted and Talented Education](#)  
[Gifted and Talented Education: Principles Into Practice](#)  
[Gifted and Talented in the 21st Century](#)  
[Gifted Articles](#)  
[The Gifted Child](#)  
[Gifted Children: Are Their Gifts Being Identified, Encouraged, or Ignored?](#)  
[Gifted Child Today](#)  
[Gifted Development Center](#)  
[Gifted Exchange](#)  
[Gifted/Learning Disabled](#)  
[Gifted Resource Center](#)  
[A Glossary of Gifted Education](#)  
[GT-CyberSource, Your Gateway to Gifted Resources!](#)  
[GT World](#)  
[Helping Gifted Students With Stress Management](#)  
[Helping Others While Learning](#)  
[Helping Your Highly Gifted Child](#)  
[High Ability and Gifted Education](#)

High Achieving Students in the Era of NCLB

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:46AM (-08:00)

Homeschooling Gifted Students

The Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration

Is It a Cheetah?

Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth

Know Your Legal Rights in Gifted Education

Massachusetts Association for Gifted Education

'Mathematics for All' Must Include High-Ability and Highly

Motivated Students

National and State Associations

National Association for Gifted Children

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented

A Nation Deceived

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

NSW Association for Gifted and Talented Children

Nurturing Social-Emotional Development Of Gifted Children

Outside the Box!

Present Gifts for Future Talents: Disadvantaged and Culturally-

Different Students

Prufrock Press

Project M3

Resources for Parents, Teachers and Gifted, Talented, Creative

and Promising Mathematics Students

Questia

Smart and Bored

Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities

State Gifted Associations

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted

TalentEd

Telementor

Twice Exceptional Children--Who They Are and What to Do for

Them

Twice Gifted

Uniquely Gifted

Web Encounters of the Gifted Kind

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children

# Top Websites for Teachers - 2009

Monday, December 15, 2008

*The Arts*

8 Notes

ABC Music Notes

Americans for the Arts

Peter and Ellen Allard's Music for Young Children

Art Edventures

Art Ideas for Your Classroom

The Artist's Studio

ArtLex

Art Quest Lesson Plans

Art-Rageous

Art Resources

Arts and Creative Materials Institute

Arts ConnectEd

ArtsConnection

Arts Edge

The Arts--Heart of Education

Arts Education Partership

Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant Program

Artsonia

Art Stamps

The Artsweb

ArtsWork

The Art Window

Avalon Arts Studio

The Barnes Foundation

Beyond Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Bill's Playscript Library

Dick Blick's Art Lesson Plans

Ceramics and Pottery

Child Drama

Children's Music Workshop

Children's Theatre Plays

Computer Art Lessons

The Crafty Music Teacher's Page

Creative Drama and Theatre Education

Creative Teaching Through Drama

Dixon Ticonderoga

Drama in Education  
 Differentiated Instruction  
 Elementary Art Lesson Plans  
 Adapt Lessons to Reach All Students  
 Elementary Art Lessons  
 Authentic Assessment Overview  
 Essentials of Music  
 CAST Differentiated Instruction  
 Explore Art  
 Authentic Assessment Toolbox  
 Eyes on Art  
 Critical and Creative Thinking  
 FAMSF  
 Differentiated Instruction  
 Finale Notepad  
 Differentiated Instruction--A Scavenger Hunt  
 Folk Dance Association  
 Differentiated Instruction for Math  
 Gallery-Worldwide  
 Differentiated Instruction Links  
 Get the Picture  
 Differentiated Instruction Resources  
 Global Sound  
 Differentiating Instruction  
 Great Performances  
 A Different Place  
 Happy Note  
 Enhance Learning with Technology  
 A Holist on Art for Students  
 Four Learning Styles  
 How to Read a Painting  
 Graphic Organizers  
 Incredible Art Department  
 How To: Adjust Your Teaching Styles to Students' Learning  
 International Theater Design Archive  
 Styles  
 KidMid  
 How to Differentiate Instruction  
 Kids Music Planet  
 Layered Curriculum  
 Kids on the Move  
 Learning Styles  
 KinderArt  
 Math Graphic Organizers for Students with Disabilities  
 Magic Parrot Productions  
 Multiple Intelligences  
 Making Music  
 Debbie Silver  
 Making Music  
 Talking Brain  
 Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation  
 Tapping into Multiple Intelligences  
 Music 4 Education  
 Teaching Strategies  
 Musical Connections  
 Technology and Multiple Intelligences  
 Music and Movement  
 What's Your Child's Primary Learning Style?  
 Music by Arrangement  
 Music Education at DataDragon  
 Music K-8  
 Music Kit  
 The MusicLand  
 The Music Room  
 Music Teacher's Resource Site  
 Music Tech Teacher  
 Music Through the Curriculum  
 Musicwing  
 National Assembly of State Arts Agencies  
 National Endowment for the Arts  
 National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts

[Online Art Degrees](#)  
[Online College Search](#)  
[Oxford Music Online](#)  
[Pianopedia](#)  
[Pop Culture Madness](#)  
[Putamayo World Music](#)  
[ReviseMusic](#)  
[Rock Our World](#)  
[School and Youth Theatre](#)  
[Social Studies and the Arts](#)  
[Songs in the Key of Art](#)  
[Songwriters' Hall of Fame](#)  
[Speedball Art](#)  
[Support Music](#)  
[Teaching with the Arts](#)  
[teoría Music Theory Web](#)  
[Texas School Music Project](#)  
[This Day in History](#)  
[WEB-ARTS](#)  
[Worldwide Arts Resources](#)  
[Young Minds Inspired](#)  
[Worldwide Arts Resources](#)  
[YouthPlays](#)

[Foreign Languages and English as a Second Language](#)  
[1st Grade ESL Antics](#)  
[2nd Newbiggers Third Grade](#)  
[The Dreaming Factory](#)  
[Early Childhood](#)  
[Bad & Bath](#)hood Links  
[Barklygate](#) ESL English Site  
[East of Eden](#) Online  
[Einsid](#) So Play! Preschool Activities and Crafts  
[Gayle](#) CRP Resolved Rainbow  
[Grades 1-5](#) Resources in English as a Second Language  
[Habe's](#) ESL Capable  
[Heaming](#) English Educational Resources  
[Interact](#) English Language  
[English](#) at Mel's site  
[English](#) as Another Language  
[King's](#) Garden Lessons  
[King's](#) Daily Treehouse  
[King's](#) Garden Unit  
[King's](#) Grammar the Easy Way  
[King's](#) Portals  
[K3](#) Bears Learning Links  
[KSL](#) Cole's Room  
[KSL](#) John's Pre-K Pages  
[KSL](#) Cornflakes  
[KSL](#) Marjorie's Bitch Grade  
[Kus](#) MacGaughey's First Grade  
[Kus](#) Pa Page's Fourth Grade Gifted Rules!  
[Kus](#) Everything ESL Third Grade Stars  
[Kus](#) Foreign Language Lesson Plans and Resources  
[Kus](#) Language Press Translation Tools at Lingo 24  
[Kus](#) Preschool Learners  
[Kus](#) Presenting Film clips for ESL Students  
[Kus](#) Presenting Rainbow for Foreign Language Teachers  
[Kus](#) Pinyan y Chino ones para los Niños  
[Kus](#) Pinyin Teacher's Nook  
[Kus](#) Page's Kindergarten Lesson Plans  
[Kus](#) Teach Resources  
[Kus](#) Teach English to Kids Primary Teachers  
[Kus](#) Learn English Online  
[Kus](#) Learn Hebrew Online

[Learn Spanish in Peru](#)  
[Learn to Speak Spanish](#)  
[Lingua Spectrum](#)  
[LinguaWeb](#)  
[Mark's ESL World](#)  
[MES English](#)  
[Moving On](#)  
[Palabea](#)  
[Refugee Educators' Network](#)  
[Sounds of English](#)  
[Randall's ESL Listening Lab](#)  
[Speak Read Write](#)  
[Teach Children ESL](#)  
[TESall](#)  
[U.S.A. Learns](#)  
[Verbalplanet](#)  
[Vocabulix](#)

[Beauties and Physical Education](#)  
[Boarding Schools Achievement](#)  
[Bosch Teacher Trust Fund](#)  
[Adison for Healthy Kids Model Development and Dissemination Grant](#)  
[American Council for Drug Education](#)  
[The Beaulieu Bush Foundation](#)  
[Bates Foundation Grants](#)  
[Educational Grants](#)  
[Breakfast Breaks Foundation](#)  
[The Bright Side](#)  
[Florida Book Rural Education and Development](#)  
[Bully for Teachers](#)  
[Belmont Mills Foundation](#)  
[The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools](#)  
[Child Diabetes Self Guide](#)  
[Grants for Education and Technology](#)  
[Etap for Education](#)  
[Clean Up the Classroom](#)  
[CNA All American for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education](#)  
[Clonard Gray Virginia Environmental Foundation](#)  
[Duke Family of California](#)  
[Doss Foundation](#)  
[Dove Self Esteem Foundation](#)  
[SMARTer Kids Foundation](#)  
[Eastman Medical Foundation](#)  
[The William P. and Patricia Hewlett Foundation](#)  
[Ezzy Hoping of Children's Health](#)  
[EXCITE](#)  
[Field Day Ideas from Dr. Woolard](#)  
[Field Day Ideas from Teachnet](#)  
[Fight Meningitis](#)  
[Fire Safety](#)  
[Flu Facts](#)  
[The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network](#)  
[Food Pyramid](#)  
[Food Science Experiments](#)  
[Full Apologies](#)  
[Get Animated](#)  
[Got2BSafe!](#)  
[Got Breakfast?](#)  
[Great Activities](#)  
[Healthier US](#)



Health Magazine  
 Handmade Arts  
 Health Wealth: Kids, Nutrients, and Health  
 30 Free Books from Reading A-Z  
 Healthy Fridge  
 ABC's of the Writing Process  
 Healthy Hands, Healthy Kids  
 The Academy of American Poets  
 Healthy Readers, Healthy Writers  
 Activated Storytellers  
 Helpguide  
 Alphabet Letter Cartoons  
 Human Anatomy Online  
 Alphabuddies  
 Human Body and Mind  
 Amazing Handwriting Worksheet Maker Tool  
 Human Body Links  
 Amazon Reading Zoo  
 Incredible Human Machine  
 American Literature  
 International Food Information Council  
 American Writers  
 Kids Running  
 America Reads Challenge  
 Know and Grow  
 America Scores  
 Learn Fire Safety with Sparky  
 Authors and Illustrators for Young Children  
 Life Skills Training  
 Authors in Schools  
 Log It  
 The Baldwin Project  
 Look Out for Kids  
 The Barbara Bush Foundation  
 Moving and Learning  
 Beginning Books for Early Readers  
 MrGym  
 Beyond Books  
 National Association for Sport and Physical Education  
 Big Ideas in Beginning Reading  
 NIDA Goes Back to School  
 Book It!  
 Nurturing Nutrition  
 Book Links Magazine  
 Nutrition and Kids  
 Bookshare  
 Nutrition Data  
 Boy Meets Book  
 Nutrition Explorations  
 Building Blocks to Reading  
 Open Wide and Trek Inside  
 Canadian Children's Book Centre  
 The Partnership for a Drug-Free America  
 Carl's Corner  
 PE Central  
 Carnival of Children's Literature  
 Physical Education  
 Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site  
 Physical Education and Technology Resources  
 The Celebration of Women Writers  
 Physical Education: Fitness for Life  
 Center for Digital Storytelling  
 Physical Education Lesson Plans  
 Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement  
 Pilates Exercises Guide  
 Chasing the Frog: Movies Based on True Stories  
 Prevention Partners  
 Children of the Code  
 SAMHSA Model Programs  
 Children's and Teen Books  
 Science-Based Drug Abuse Education  
 Children's Books Online  
 Second Step  
 Children's Literature  
 Shape Up America!  
 Children's Literature Guide  
 Smart Spot  
 Children's Literature Lesson Plans and Resources  
 Songs About Lifeskills  
 Children's Literature Network  
 Stop Smoking Tips  
 Children's Literature Resources  
 Street Play  
 Children's Picture Book Database

Soccer Guide  
 The Classroom Electric  
 SapsWisdoms  
 ClickN-READ Phonics  
 Susan's Physical Education, Health and Sports Site  
 The Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read  
 Adding Wheel Touching  
 Writing Writing Program  
 Walter's Self-Direct Achievement  
 A Compact for Reading and School-Home Links  
 Achieve It! Place  
 William Writing  
 Alphabet Kiosk  
 Database of Award-Winning Children's Literature  
 Appeals to Quit Smoking Now  
 DIBELS  
 A-Z Teacher Stuff  
 Discover Writing  
 Reason Learning Center  
 A Nealian Tracing Pages  
 Can Teach  
 Dolch Sight Words  
 Celebrate Women's History Month  
 Dynamic Indicators of Vocabulary Skills  
 Computer Lesson Plans and Links  
 Dyslexia Simulation  
 Cool Lessons  
 Early Literacy  
 Counseling and Guidance  
 E-Books  
 CREATE  
 E-Blocks  
 The Creative Learning Exchange  
 Effective Reading Instruction  
 Dana Foundation  
 E-LA Test Prep  
 Debbie's Unit Factory  
 Elementary Reading  
 DLTK's Educational Activities  
 Embracing the Child  
 Ed Ed Lin  
 Encourage Writing  
 Ed Helper  
 English Banana  
 Education Planet  
 English Language Centre  
 Edu-Found  
 English Zone  
 Elementary Themes  
 St. Kidstuff  
 The Gateway  
 Every Child Reading: An Action Plan  
 The Idea Box  
 Everyone Can Read  
 Ideas for the First Day of School  
 Fiction Teachers  
 Illinois State Museum  
 Florida Center for Reading Research  
 Kiddy House  
 Koltexis  
 Kodak Lesson Plans  
 Four Blocks Literacy Center  
 Learning Page  
 The Four Blocks Literacy Model  
 Lesson Plan Central  
 Free Books  
 Lesson Plans  
 Free Reading  
 Lesson Planet  
 Fry's Readability Graph  
 Lesson Plan Search  
 Get Caught Reading  
 Lesson Plans Library  
 Get Ready to Read  
 Lesson Sense  
 Glossary of Poetry Terms  
 Lesson Snips  
 Good Conversations  
 Library of Congress Learning Page  
 Good Reading  
 MPBN  
 Google Lit Trips  
 Gops  
 Grades 3-5 English/Language Arts WebQuests

[The Graphic Organizer](#)  
[Graphic Organizer Makers](#)  
[Graphic Organizers](#)  
[Great Book Stories wiki](#)  
[Guided Reading](#)  
[Guys Read](#)  
[Handwriting for Kids](#)  
[Handwriting Worksheet Maker](#)  
[Healthy Readers, Healthy Writers](#)  
[Here in the Bonny Glen](#)  
[The Horn Book](#)  
[How to Write a Poem](#)  
[I AM Foundation](#)  
[I Can Read](#)  
[Ideas for Teaching the Writing Process](#)  
[I Love Speech and Language](#)  
[Imagination Station](#)  
[Improve Student Performance in Reading](#)  
[Independent Investigation Method](#)  
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[Into the Book](#)  
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[Itchy's Alphabet](#)  
[It's in the Can](#)  
[It's Storytime](#)  
[Judy Reads Books](#)  
[Jumpstart's Read for the Record](#)  
[Junior Great Books](#)  
[Just Playing](#)  
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[Kids Lit](#)  
[KQED](#)  
[Language Arts Links](#)  
[Latino Bibliography](#)  
[Learning Abilities Books](#)  
[Learning to Read](#)  
[Tom Lee Storyteller](#)  
[The Lexile Framework for Reading](#)  
[Literactive](#)  
[Literacy Achievement Research Center](#)  
[Literacy Connections](#)  
[Literacy Education Online](#)

Literacy Lane  
Literacy Net  
Literacy Resources  
Literacy Rules  
Literary Calendar  
Literature Learning Ladders  
Literature Place  
Literature for Literacy  
Little Readers for Little Readers  
Marilee's Picturebook Links  
Mark My Time  
Massachusetts Children's Book Awards  
Math and Reading Help for Kids  
Morgan Dynamic Phonics  
Mrs. Alphabet  
Mrs. Atkinson's Reading Room  
Multicultural Children's Literature  
Myths, Fables, Fairytales and Folklore  
Nancy Keane's Children's Literature Webpage  
National Spelling Bee  
Nellie's English Projects  
Notes from the Windowsill  
Nursery Rhymes--Lyrics, and Origins  
On Line Books  
Online Poetry Classroom  
Open Court Reading Resources  
Open Court Resources  
Oral Language Acquisition Inventory  
Orton Gillingham  
OWL Writing Lab  
The Partnership for Reading  
Pearson Mentor  
Phonemic Awareness  
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening  
Planet Esmé  
Platitudes with Attitudes  
Plugged-in to Reading  
Poem of Quotes  
Poem Source  
Poetic Forms  
Poetry 180  
Poetry Alive

Poetry Archive  
Poetry Class  
Poetry Daily  
Poetry Society of America  
Poetry Teachers  
Poetry Theme Unit  
The Poetry Zone  
Poets  
Poets and Writers  
Potato Hill Poetry  
Pot Luck Children's Literary Magazine  
Predictable Books  
Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children  
Publish-a-Kid Contest  
RAMP to Reading Resources  
Raz-Kids  
Read 180 Dragon Den  
Reader's Theatre  
Read for 2006  
Reading A-Z  
Reading Comprehension Connection  
Reading Comprehension Worksheets  
Reading First  
Reading Games to Print Out  
The Reading Genie  
Reading Is for Everyone  
Reading Is Fundamental  
Reading Is Our Cup of Tea  
Reading Lady  
Reading/Language Arts  
Reading Lesson  
The Reading Matrix  
Reading n' Phonics  
Reading Online  
Reading Online Test  
Reading Rockets  
Reading Success Lab  
Read Kiddo Read  
Read Print  
Read Write Think  
Really Good Stuff Reading  
Recognition and Response

Repeat After Us  
Response to Intervention  
Response to Intervention Resources  
River of Words  
Santa Maria Bonita School District Reading Website  
Saxon Phonics and Spelling  
Scholastic Authors  
The Scoop  
Scripts for Schools  
See it, Say it, Write it  
Seven Impossible Things Before Breakfast  
Shadow Poetry  
Shape Books  
Aaron Shepard's RT Page  
Sight Words  
Sitton Spelling  
SmartWriters  
Songs and Poems  
Special Topics in Folklore and Mythology  
Spellarama  
Spoonfuls of Stories  
Story Arts  
Storybook Online  
Story-Go-Round  
Story-Lovers  
StoryWatchers Club  
Superkids  
SurLaLune Fairy Tale Pages  
Tampa Reads  
Teaching Phonics  
Technology Assisting Literacy Knowledge  
Texas Bluebonnet Awards  
Thinkfinity Literacy Network  
THRASS Phoneme Machine  
The Top 21 Children's Books Made Into Films  
Top English Teaching  
TPRI  
Trelease on Reading  
TumbleBook Club  
USBBY  
Using Picture Books to Explicitly Teach Comprehension Strategies

Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts  
Vocabulary A-Z  
Voices from the Gaps  
Waxing Poetic  
Webbing Into Literacy  
Web English Teacher  
Wilson Language Training  
Wired for Books  
The Word Isolator  
Word Masters  
Words & Stuff  
Words for Beginning Readers  
World Wide School Library  
Write Away  
The Writer's Almanac  
Write World-Class Poetry Like the Masters  
Writing Fix  
Writing with Writers  
Writing Portfolios







missing so much class time, which has resulted in incomplete assignments and difficulty learning.

Craig is a fourteen-year-old boy who has missed forty-three days of school since beginning the eighth grade four months ago. When home from school, Craig spends most of the day online or playing video games. On the days he does attend school he is typically late for his first period, which enables him to avoid hanging out with other kids before class. He always goes to the library during lunch. When he does go to class, he sits in the back of the classroom, never raises his hand and has difficulty working on group projects. Craig's teachers have noticed that he is always absent on days that tests or book reports are scheduled. His moms & dads have already punished him after his first report card came home since he received D's in Math and Social Studies and failed Gym for cutting. Craig's moms & dads have started to wonder if they should change his school placement and have asked the school to arrange home tutoring while this alternative is explored.

#### Prevalence and defining characteristics—

As much as 28% of school aged kids in America refuse school at some point during their education.<sup>1</sup> School refusal behavior is as common among boys as girls. While any youngster aged 5-17 may refuse to attend school, most youths who refuse are 10-13 years old. Peaks in school refusal behavior are also seen at times of transition such as 5-6 and 14-15 years as kids enter new schools. Although the problem is considerably more prevalent in some urban areas, it is seen equally across socioeconomic levels.

Sara and Craig are just two examples of how school refusal manifests in youth. The hallmark of this behavior is its heterogeneity. Defined as substantial, youngster-motivated refusal to attend school and/or difficulties remaining in class for an entire day, the term "school refusal behavior" replaces obsolete terms such as "truancy" or "school phobia," because such labels do not adequately or accurately represent all youths who have difficulty attending school. School refusal behavior is seen as a continuum that includes youths who always miss school as well as those who rarely miss school but attend under duress. Hence, school refusal behavior is identified in youths aged 5-17 years who:

1. go to school following crying, clinging, tantrums or other intense behavior problems
2. exhibit unusual distress during school days that leads to pleas for future absenteeism
3. attend school initially but leave during the course of the school day
4. are entirely absent from school

As evidenced by Sara and Craig, there are varying degrees of school refusal behavior. Initial school refusal behavior for a brief period may resolve without intervention. Substantial school refusal behavior occurs for a minimum of two weeks. Acute school refusal behavior involves cases lasting two weeks to one year, being a consistent problem for the majority of that time. Chronic school refusal behavior interferes with two or more academic years as this refers to cases lasting more than one calendar year. Youths who are absent from school as a result of chronic physical illness, school withdrawal which is motivated by moms & dads or societal conditions such as homelessness, or running away to avoid abuse should not be included in the above definition of school refusal behavior as these factors are not youngster-initiated.

While some school refusers exhibit a more heterogeneous presentation, typically these youths can be categorized into two main types of troublesome behavior -- internalizing or

externalizing problems. The most prevalent internalizing problems are generalized worrying ("the worry-wart"), social anxiety and isolation, depression, fatigue, and physical complaints (e.g. stomachaches, nausea, tremors and headaches). The most prevalent externalizing problems are tantrums (including crying and screaming), verbal and physical aggression, and oppositional behavior.

The cause and maintenance of school refusal behavior—

Sara had several physiological symptoms at school and went home to be with her mother and play. Craig on the other hand, avoided potentially distressing social and evaluative situations at school, which negatively impacted his academic performance. Although many behaviors characterize youths who refuse school, there are a few variables that serve to cause and maintain this problem. School refusal behavior occurs for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To receive attention from significant others outside of school
2. To pursue tangible reinforcement outside of school
3. To escape uncomfortable peer interactions and/or academic performance situations such as test-taking or oral presentations
4. To avoid school-related objects or situations that cause general distress such as anxiety, depression or physiological symptoms

The above four reasons for school refusal behavior can be explained by principles of reinforcement. Any one youngster can refuse school for one or more of these reasons. The first two reasons characterize youths who refuse school to avoid or escape something unpleasant (negative reinforcement). For example, one of the reasons for Sara's crying in the morning is her fear of riding the school bus. By tantruming she accomplishes her goal of avoiding the school-related object (the school bus) that causes her distress.

Another example of negative reinforcement is when Craig escapes aversive peer interactions and exams by school refusing. The third and fourth reasons characterize youths who refuse school to gain rewards (positive reinforcement). Sara, as is common with many younger kids, tries to avoid school as a means of having her mother provide her with excessive attention and closeness. Thus, Sara's behavior in this situation may be associated with separation anxiety.

Another instance of positive reinforcement is exemplified by Craig, who basically has more fun being at home on the computer and listening to music than being in school. It is important to note that alcohol and drug use can occur among adolescents who school refuse for one or more of the reasons listed above. For example, a teenager who is extremely socially anxious may drink alcohol as a way of enduring distressing social or evaluative situations. Another youngster who avoids school may smoke marijuana during school hours as a means of gaining acceptance by peers or simply because it is more enjoyable than attending school.

While all forms of school refusal can be equally debilitating, typically, mental health professionals receive fewer referrals for youths who have internalizing as opposed to externalizing behavior problems. In other words, the youth who exhibits anxiety is less likely to receive treatment than the youth who is disruptive.

Treatment—

School personnel -- teachers, nurses, principals -- are frequently the first professionals to identify the existence of a problem that requires immediate attention and intervention. As such, school personnel play a vital role in alerting moms & dads to the problem and helping facilitate referrals for treatment by mental health specialists. The next step towards effective treatment by mental health professionals is gaining an understanding of the reasons that motivate school refusal. While school refusal per se is not a clinical disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, it can be associated with several psychiatric disorders (e.g. Separation Anxiety Disorder, Social Phobia, Conduct Disorder). Thus, it is vital that youths who are school refusing receive a comprehensive evaluation that includes a structured diagnostic interview and empirically supported assessment measures, such as "The School Refusal Assessment Scale" (SRAS), to understand the biopsychosocial factors contributing to their behavior.

Once a clear diagnostic picture is established, an individualized treatment plan can be developed to address the positive and negative reinforcers that are associated with the school refusal behavior and comorbid psychiatric disorders.

The traditional treatments for school refusal behavior employed by mental health professionals have unfortunately had limited effectiveness. While certain treatment modalities such as psychodynamic therapies, forced school attendance, family-based techniques, medication and use of systematic desensitization work as the sole treatment modality for some youngsters, not all kids who refuse school will improve with the chosen treatment. Thus, clinical scientists have developed a scientifically-based, comprehensive assessment and treatment package for youths with school refusal behavior.

Consultation with youngster psychiatrists may be necessary in certain cases of school refusal behavior that involve highly complicated clinical symptoms and comorbidities. For example, in order to increase the probability of successful therapeutic intervention, the youngster refusing school who exhibits mainly internalizing problems may benefit from adjunctive pharmacotherapy (e.g., Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor - SSRI) to help lower his or her anxiety.

Returning to our case examples, careful evaluation revealed that Sara's school refusal behavior was initially a function of separation anxiety which was positively reinforced by having her mother's attention and play time during school hours. This lead her therapist to design a treatment program combining somatic management skills, practice in being away from her mom and parent training in contingency management. Following Craig's evaluation he was prescribed a treatment to address his social anxiety that motivated his school refusal. Craig's behavior was negatively reinforced by avoiding social and evaluative situations. Thus, his treatment plan involved cognitive restructuring, role-plays, social skills and problem-solving skills, and gradual reintroduction to school.

In addition, a strong working relationship between the therapist and the youth's school officials is an integral component of a successful treatment program for school refusal behavior. As an example, through a structured treatment plan with clear goals and a definitive time frame, a helpful school official might facilitate Craig's return to school or Sara remaining in her classroom rather than the nurse's office.

**TREATMENT COMPONENTS FOR EACH FUNCTION OF SCHOOL REFUSAL BEHAVIOR:**

Escape from negative affect—(Sadness, the blues, fears, generalized anxiety and worry, separation anxiety, various phobias):

- Somatic management skills such as breathing retraining or progressive muscle relaxation training
- Gradual reintroduction (exposure) to school
- Self-reinforcement and building self efficacy

Escape from aversive social and evaluative situations—(Social phobia, test anxiety, public speaking fears, shyness, social skills deficits):

- Cognitive restructuring of negative self-talk
- Role play practice
- Graded exposure tasks involving real-life situations
- Social skills training and problem-solving skills training
- Building coping templates

Attention-seeking behavior—(Tantrums, crying, clinging, separation anxiety):

- Parent training in contingency management
- Changing parent commands
- Establishing routines
- Use of rewards and punishers for school attendance and school refusal
- Forced attendance, if necessary and under special circumstances

Positive tangible reinforcement—(Lack of structure or respect for house rules and responsibilities, free access to reinforcement, disregard for limits):

- Contracting with moms & dads to increase incentive for school attendance
- Curtail social and other activities as a result of nonattendance
- Provide the family with alternative problem-solving strategies to reduce conflict
- Communication skills and peer refusal skills are also sometimes added to this process

When kids like Sara and Craig refuse school, immediate intervention is necessary not only because school attendance is mandated by law, but also to address negative social, psychological and academic consequences to the youth and family. If not identified and treated, school refusal behavior has severe short- and long-term consequences. Some of the short-term consequences of school refusal behavior include significant youngster stress, deteriorating school performance, social isolation, and family tension and conflict. Some of the longer-term consequences include decreased probability of attending college, impaired social functioning impacting personal and professional goals, and increased risk of substance abuse, anxiety and depression in adulthood.

Furthermore, the longer the youth refuses to attend school, the greater the risk of these problems developing. Taken together, it is essential that kids, moms & dads, mental health professionals, and school officials act collectively to further understand school refusal. It remains a prevalent and potentially grave problem that is under-investigated regarding empirically-based assessment and treatment.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:32PM (-08:00)

# This program makes a lot of sense to me...

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

Dear Mark,

I am sure you have heard it all before...but I was (am) at my wits in with my 15-year-old son. We have made our first appearance in the court for his truancy. He attends school every day, but he "skips" the detention classes and our district is strict on it's policy and counts this as an absent.

He is failing every class except Gym and a sports fitness class. They are very low F's in the 20-30%, which tells me he is just physically there and not contributing at all. It started last year, new school he played football his 8th grade year, he is a very good athlete. His grades started to fail and the school couldn't let him play basketball. He gave up when they took his sports away from him. Even after informing him that if he brought his grades up he could be a starter on the varsity team his freshman year. He wouldn't do the schoolwork to get him back on track again.

All he does now is come home and shut the door to his room, play online video games. Never speaks unless he wants something. I know that I spoiled him, over indulgence. His dad and I have been divorced for 13 years, and we have always put him first. His dad and I have been close and remain so. I have been remarried for 11 years, and my son and husband don't have much respect for each other.

So when I came across your website and ebook, I bought it right away! I am so excited to have access to this knowledge. We are to start family therapy in January through our local University, which was ordered by the court. I felt I needed something right away, and I am so glad I came upon your program. I look forward to working the program and having a relationship with my son again.

I never thought that my over indulgence with my son would cause all the behavior that we have been experiencing in the house. Just about every "symptom" of over indulgence you have explained, he is (we are) experiencing.

I love my son. I want to see him succeed in life and in love. Besides his bad behavior and lack of academic success, he is a good kid. I believe with the help of your program, I can possibly get my entire family back on track again. So thank you, I just feel this is my answer.

This program makes a lot of sense to me. I appreciate the straight talk and not a bunch of lists and personal research. I need help now and that is what I feel this offers.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

C.R.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:33AM (-08:00)

## His pediatrician refers to him as a "case study"...

Thursday, December 18, 2008

Good morning Mark,

Oh my God, it is actually working. Adam has now been back at home 2 days and last night he tried pushing our buttons again, with no success. We remained calm and told he we didn't want to argue. He wanted to use the car to go to his friend's house and we said that he had nothing to earn the use of the car. We told him if he did his homework he could use it and he chose not to, so he walked. Before he left he said something odd he said "you guys aren't talking to me", I said "I don't know what you mean, we talked all through dinner and after dinner (when we insisted he do dishes).....". Anyway, you know what we didn't do, we didn't yell and scream and I guess he thought that we hadn't talked to him because of it....very strange. We said we loved him before he went to bed and this morning before he left and asked him to make good choices today. My husband has a hard time telling him that he loves him, but he did it, I was very proud of him. Actually, I think we both have a hard time saying "I love you" right now, because he has been so awful to be around.

I guess you might not really want an update, but I just needed to tell you because I was soooo impressed.

Oh, one more thing, our son is severe ADHD to a point that his pediatrician refers to him as a "case study" and has agreed to keep him on as a patient until he is 18 instead of 16.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Thank you for the update. Updates are always welcome -- even if they are not so pretty.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:02AM (-08:00)

## Speak softly, and carry a big stick...

Thursday, December 18, 2008

Hi Mark

I seem to have reached stalemate. We are not having as many arguments as I refuse to get angry and always use my best poker face, however my son has a nasty angry response to every single thing I say, even if it is just hello. The responses are normally "shut up, don't speak to me, I don't want to talk to you, F... off" ...I understand this is him just trying to push my buttons, but how can we move on from this. I can't have any conversation. I have tried asking him once per week to join us for dinner, but to no avail (although I will keep going). There is no way he would ever accompany us on an outing. I

know we still have a long way to go. Can you point me in the right direction? Thanks.

S.

.....

Hi S.,

First of all, it is not uncommon for boys to have serious power struggles with their fathers – and girls to struggle with their mothers.

Second, I suggest that you stop trying to “bond” with him – that’s right - stop it!

Here’s why:

The true paradox is the harder you try to win-over an intense child, the more you lose him. Teenagers, by their very nature, want to be separate from their parents. But strong-willed, out-of-control teenagers take the term “autonomy-seeking” to a whole new level.

Let’s look into the mind of your son (the bad news first):

1. He does NOT like you (although he loves you in the deep recesses of his heart, and if you died suddenly, he would be devastated).
2. He probably thinks that you are a “geek” or a “nerd” – therefore he does NOT want to be anything like you.
3. He takes the father-son relationship for granted.
4. He creates distance in order to preserve his autonomy.
5. The behavior he uses to create distance comes in the form of verbal assaults.
6. He has no plans of changing this cycle any time soon.

The good news:

1. This will all change when he leaves the nest and has to live out in the “real world.”
2. After a few months raising his first child – he will realize that “dad” wasn’t such a “bad guy” after all – that’s right ...he will “like you” again.

Back to the paradox—

Just as “the harder you try to win-over an intense child, the more you lose him” - the opposite is true as well. And this is where it may get a bit tough for you.

You should work toward emotional detachment. Once you are truly “emotionally detached,” here’s what happens:

1. You won’t be as likely to take his attacks personally. Instead, you will view them as an exaggerated need to be independent.
2. You won’t try harder than your son to preserve the relationship, thus you will be much less stressed out, confused and aggravated.
3. Your son will stop taking the relationship for granted, thus you will garner more displays of respect from him.
4. You will spend more time and energy taking care of YOU.
5. You will be able to cultivate the patience required to ride out the storm.



Now, this doesn't mean that you should be his "whipping post." You cannot just roll over and allow him to be abusive toward you. This would send a very bad message that "it is o.k. to abuse authority figures."

I'm going to use a very unpopular term here for dramatic emphasis because I want to get my point across in no uncertain terms: You absolutely cannot be perceived as a "pussy" in your son's eyes. If you display any signs of weakness whatsoever, your son will use you as prey. In the event he is calling you names or using excessive profanity, a consequence (see "When You Want Something From Your Kid" – online version of the eBook) should be implemented. However, this doesn't mean you should adopt an abusive attitude in return. As the old saying goes, "Speak softly, and carry a big stick."

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:35AM (-08:00)

## He didn't come home last night...

Friday, December 19, 2008

Hi Mark,

From my last email you could see things were progressing well and you said they would get worse before they got better. Anyway, it was the winter formal at the high school last night. A\_\_ asked if he could stay at a friends house after the dance and we said no, we don't want to argue about it.....anyway, he called twice still trying to stay at a friends house, we continued to say no.....So, he didn't come home last night, he was to be home at 1:30am, he had no excuse for not coming back we even told him that we'd pick him up from wherever he was at 1:30am if he didn't have a ride.

So, my question to you is am i going to simply do the 3 day grounding thing or something else? Let me remind you that he was kicked out for not listening to our rules and only allowed to return on Tuesday evening being 3 days ago.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

First of all, don't be disappointed. Set-backs like this are very common (in fact I would wonder what's wrong if you didn't have any set-backs periodically).

Clearly, staying at the friend's house was very important to him.

Allow him to make these mistakes, then calmly implement the appropriate consequence as outlined in session #3.

Re: So, my question to you is am i going to simply do the 3 day grounding thing or something else?

I am quite concerned that you are leaping ahead in the program. You should still be in session #1. You will learn that we do not start out with 3-days for discipline. It will be best for you to digest most of the material -- and then ask any unanswered questions. Many of the questions you seem to be having here in the early going will be addressed in the eBook.

A good rule of thumb for new members of OPS is as follows:

Handle problems the way you ordinarily would -- until instructed to do it differently.

We must not implement a bunch of new parenting techniques over night. If we do, it will most likely be the kiss of failure. And most parents are really tired of failing.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:47AM (-08:00)

## Last week he was arrested for shoplifting...

Saturday, December 20, 2008

Hi Mark, we have been trying to work through the programme but are having difficulty with consequences, for example to breaking curfews. In the past 2 months, I\_\_ has made new friends that we don't know, is secretive and has decided he can do what he wants. The change was so sudden, we're in shock! Last week he was arrested for shoplifting and today, I got a call from the Transit police saying that he was riding the skytrain without a ticket. The constable said he was heading into a bad area and hanging out with undesirables. We grounded him for three days after the shoplifting but he only stayed home for one day then snuck out again. It seems that we're unable to make the grounding stick and we are alarmed about the changes in him. He seems quite detached, agrees with everything we say and then does what he wants. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

A.

.....

Hi A.,

First of all, when teen's behavior changes radically and suddenly, it is nearly always the case that he/she is experimenting with drugs and/or alcohol -- and possibly has already developed a drug habit. Thus, you may have bigger fish to fry than "grounding problems."

Secondly, he already received a "natural" consequence for shoplifting (just be sure he pays any fines out of his own money). When a teen is caught shoplifting, it is rarely the case that it is the first time. Here are a few ways that parents can use shoplifting incidents to teach lessons:

1. "Volunteer" his time at a community agency.
2. Assign him to write a paper on stealing.
3. Have him apologize – in person, in writing, or both – to the people he stole from. If it's a store, have him apologize to the manager.
4. Make him buy some educational materials to donate to a local school, the police department or a community agency.
5. Make the offender repay the price of the merchandise. If he doesn't have the money, make him work it off. Be creative.
6. When choosing to limit your child's privileges, make sure it is something you have control over and can follow through on.

Thirdly, I'm not sure where you live, so I have no way of knowing what the Juvenile Codes (laws) are in your area. In the U.S., the recommendation to parents in your shoes is for them to (a) call police at the time curfew has been violated in order to file a report, (b) go to the local Juvenile Probation Department and file either "runaway" or "incurability" complaints in order to enlist the help of an Officer of the Court, and (c) while the child is running the streets, confiscate everything (e.g., computers, cell phones, junk food, bedroom doors, video games, etc.). In worst-case scenarios - and depending on the child's age - parents have been known to move their child out of the house to go live with a trusted friend, family member, residential facility, etc.

Bottom line: this is serious. You will have to pull the term "tough love" to a whole new level to address this properly.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:00AM (-08:00)

## I have created a little girl who has total control and I have none...

Sunday, December 21, 2008

Dear Mark, I just purchased your on line therapy book and after reading the first few pages i just cried and cried. I am a single mum of a wild 14 year old girl. I came from a bad childhood and therefore have parented all wrong !!! all love, attention and gifts etc and as a result i have created a little girl who has total control and I have none. I now suffer extreme depression and anxiety and have contemplated ending my life. Listening to your audio is giving me strength and confidence to turn this all around. Thank you so much for your program... you are like an angel that has come from nowhere. Once again thank you.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:03PM (-08:00)

## I have a huge struggle that is brewing...

Sunday, December 21, 2008

Mark,

I have posted this on the blog but did not find it. I have a 13-year-old daughter that is a cutter. She is getting help with that. Anyway I have a huge struggle that is brewing. We had a agreement that she could have a cell phone after she raised her F in school, now she has two F's. She is telling me the only thing she wants for Christmas is a cell phone and if I get her one I will be amazed how much her grades will go up because she will be happy and right now she is very unhappy. She hates being home, hates me, and wants to go and live with a friend. Is this battle about the phone worth her leaving the home to a foster home because living at this friend's is out of the question? I am thinking I will stand my ground on our agreement the first time. Please help!

.....

Hi A.,

Submissions to the blog go through an editorial review by staff before they are posted. This takes anywhere from 1 to 24 hours. In any event, I see that your post has made it to the blog. You should get some responses from other OPS members.

Re: cell phone. You're right to stand your ground. And as I'm sure you know - a new cell phone will not be any incentive for her to raise her grades.

Re: foster care. That won't be an option for you. Unless you're found to be an unfit mother, the court will not consider placing her in foster care.

You are only a week into this thing -- you have 3 more sessions to go. I'm very sure you will get the answers you need as you digest the material. Be sure to watch all the instructional videos. Email me after you get through the program, and we will trouble shoot on any remaining problems.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:23PM (-08:00)

## She lies, drinks, smokes, tries to make me feel guilty cause i wont...

Monday, December 22, 2008

My 16 yo daughter has left to live with her bf she lies, drinks, smokes tries to make me feel guilty cause i wont give her money. She wants to live like a 20yo but has no job is with people that are quite often in trouble with the police. I just want her to come home and go back to school. She just wants to do what she wants when she wants and the way she wants. I've tried reasoning calmly, getting angry, being tough, making her feel guilty, nothing seems to work, she is just so stubborn about what she wants to do she doesn't

seem to care, about herself, her future or her family. Please help!!!

.....

Hi N.,

We always want to allow our kids to make mistakes (unless it is life-threatening of course). Making mistakes is the ONLY way a strong-willed child learns. So, to save her from making the mistake of living with her boyfriend also disallows her a learning/growing opportunity.

This relationship with the 20-year-old is not likely to last very long. Let her know that she is always welcome to return home – BUT under your guidelines/rules – not hers. Draft a contract soon – like later tonight – that lays out in great detail what will be required of her in order for her to live in your house. Then when (notice I said “when” rather than “if”) she starts whining to you about how her boyfriend is mistreating her and wants to come home – make her sign the contract up front.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:49AM (-08:00)

## He smokes weed...

Monday, December 22, 2008

Hi S.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi Mark

I would appreciate some help in getting through our latest development right as I am not sure if I have handled it right or how I should continue moving forward as it is so near to Christmas. I gave my son money to go shopping for clothes for Christmas.

This was a big trust issue as he smokes weed but things have been a bit better since I started using your techniques.

In the future, it will be best for you to go with him to buy the clothes so that you can be assured that the money is spent on clothes rather than drugs. And it seems that drug abuse is really the larger issue here.

It's O.K. to give gifts during Christmas, birthdays and graduation. But all other "gift-giving" must be earned.

He spent 60% of the money and said he wanted to use the rest to spend in the sales. I asked him to give it back and he refused and promised to keep it. I decided to trust him but made it clear that he was not to spend it. Next day he asked if he could use some for a pizza, I said no and said that I wanted the money back and he would get it Christmas day. He refused I told him if he chose to do keep the money he would lose his play

station until I got it back. He did not return the money so I removed his play station deadlock ensued which led me to believe that he had spent the money so I asked him if he had the money to give me or had he spent it then the consequence would be grounding for 2 days. After a lot of shouting and aggressive behaviour throughout which I kept to the rules; best poker face and refusing to argue, I did explain once why he should not have spent the money, he tried to tell me he had bought a Christmas present for me and a load of other cock and bull about going to McDonalds, I know he spent it on drugs although I never said this. He became very threatening and I called the police when he pushed me and through a wet towel in my face. The police let me down because after 15 mins they called back and asked if I still wanted them to come? As the situation had calmed down I said no.

Be sure to say 'yes' next time. You stopped short here. You certainly do not want to send a clear message to your son that it is O.K. to batter women.

He admitted he had spent most of the money but gave me what was left and I said thank you but he was grounded for spending the money without permission, he refused to accept this and I told him I would not argue but that if he chose to ignore the grounding he would lose all of his privileges until he did his grounding. I have removed his Sky box and play station but all that has happened is that he has shouted a load of abuse and gone out. I am not sure if I have handled this well and we are only a few days away from Christmas. What do I do just keep going? Offer a life line, if so what? If I have to keep going do I give Christmas presents? Help!

Please review the strategy entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [online version of the eBook]. As you should know by now, we never take stuff away for more than 7 days -- and 3 days works best. Thus, the discipline should not cut into Christmas time.

Before I sign off can I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the help this programme has given me, I was at my wits end, I cannot remember a happy moment with my son in years and judging from what you say it may be a long time yet but you have given me a way to deal with it. So I hope you will accept my best wishes to you and your family for a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Thank you! Merry Christmas.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:53AM (-08:00)

## Interview with Mark Hutten, M.A. [Psychology Today]

Tuesday, December 23, 2008

A quote from an interview with Mark Hutten, M.A. [Psychology Today]:

"Strong-willed, out-of-control children will rehabilitate themselves when they are ready, and not a minute sooner. They will change their behavior when – and only when – they

choose to. The job of parents is not to get children to obey. It is to simply teach them that responsible behavior results in one sort of consequence while irresponsible behavior results in quite another. Oppositional, defiant kids refuse to accept this fundamental reality until they are forced to experience a significant degree of discomfort related to their poor choices. Discomfort comes from parents' implementation of tough love – and unfortunately, tough love is often tougher on the parent than the child, especially if the parent has adopted an over-indulgent parenting style over the years.”

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:33AM (-08:00)

## U.S. Boarding Schools: Alabama to Georgia

Tuesday, December 23, 2008

Boarding Schools in Alabama--

**Indian Springs School** Indian Springs School has a special part to play in independent education. The cornerstones of the Indian Springs experience are academic excellence, the friendliness and personalization that come with thinking small, a sense of open-mindedness that derives from genuine diversity, and a commitment to cultivating good citizenship.

**Lyman Ward Military Academy** While military schools mean different things to different people, Lyman Ward's purpose is simple. LWMA is a boy's military boarding school of tradition and distinction that has provided students from around the world with a quality military prep school experience and outstanding character education since 1898.

**Marion Military Institute** The Prep school program is 4 years of academic work designed to prepare cadets for college. Marion Military Institute's Prep school program is separate and distinct from our college program and School of Service Academy Preparation (SAP) Program. Cadets who successfully complete academic work for grades 9-12 are awarded a high school diploma.

**St. Bernard Preparatory** Accredited by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, St. Bernard Prep is a co-ed Catholic boarding and day school for grades 9-12. For over a century St. Bernard has been providing a quality education to generations of students.

Boarding Schools in Arizona--

**Copper Canyon Academy** Copper Canyon, in Rimrock, Arizona, is a boarding school for girls ages 13-17 that are in need of a structured therapeutic environment. The program offers a warm, nurturing environment that promotes emotional and academic growth for every student. The staff at Copper Canyon Academy is comprised of well-trained professionals working with adolescents. Copper Canyon Academy boarding school for girls assists families and gives them the reassurance that there is a wonderful future ahead for their child and family. We truly believe combining a warm, caring, structured environment allows students to progress to their fullest potential.

**Orme School** The Orme School is a unique community for teachers and students who share a passion for academic excellence, outdoor adventure, and personal challenge. The Orme School mission is based upon the values of Tradition, Excellence, and

Character.

**Southwestern Academy** Southwestern Academy offers a warm, friendly, safe and supportive environment for boys and girls to grow toward success. Founded in 1924, Southwestern is an accredited, not-for-profit, independent school offering classes for grades six through high school with a thorough college preparatory program affording students personal attention to prepare them for universities and for life.

**Spring Ridge Academy** Spring Ridge Academy offers high school women a choice for change and an opportunity to redirect their lives. The catalyst for creating this change is a powerful, affirmative program that creates confidence and competence in core areas: emotional, physical, academic, community, and family. At Spring Ridge Academy, students confront and master the self-limiting beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors separating them from success. Low self-esteem, social inappropriateness, poor school performance – these are challenges to be managed, not immovable roadblocks.

**St. Paul's Academy** St. Paul's Preparatory Academy motivates young men to succeed in a challenging academic environment that inspires character development, leadership, and spiritual awareness.

**Sun Valley Indian School** Sun Valley Indian School provides a clean, warm, and safe boarding school environment, where our children live under the loving and prayerful care of dedicated dorm parents. The college preparatory program allows our children to participate in a wide variety of foundational classes: science, literature, math, English, physical education, Bible, history and art.

**The Fenster School** Fenster's college prep curriculum offers students the opportunity to take courses for high school and college credit. Earning college credit while in high school gives Fenster students the opportunity to begin college with some educational requirements already met.

**Verde Valley School** A school is many things, but first and last it ought to be a place where young people learn how to think for themselves. At Verde Valley School a genuinely educated person is not simply one who has attained impressive academic and professional success. At VVS, citizenship and courage and a commitment to the improvement of the world are our standards.

Boarding Schools in Arkansas--

**Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes** Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ the Mission of ABCHomes is to accept, believe in and care for children and families in crisis.

**Subiaco Academy** Subiaco Academy, a boarding/day high school, is dedicated to providing young men with the opportunity for a college preparatory education in a stable and structured environment nourished by Christian values.

Boarding Schools in California--

**Academy of the Sierras** Academy of the Sierras, a Healthy Living Academy, is the first therapeutic boarding school for overweight teens ages 13-18. It is a place where teens struggling with their weight are able to turn their lives around. The Clinical Director and the Members of the Advisory Board of Healthy Living Academies are among the world's leading experts in weight loss. Centrally located in the California countryside and in close



proximity to three national parks, Academy of the Sierras provides an ideal environment for teens to learn and adopt an active, healthy lifestyle.

**Army and Navy Academy** At the Army and Navy Academy, cadets cultivate strength of character, individual excellence, and responsible leadership, and upon graduation, they are prepared to lead lives of academic, personal, and professional achievement. Young men realize their potential through academic, extracurricular, and leadership programs that create a well-rounded learning experience.

**California Assoc of Independent Schools (CAIS)** The California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) is a non-profit organization of 185 elementary, middle and secondary schools in California. The Association serves and strengthens its schools by setting standards of academic quality and ethical conduct, by providing for the professional growth of faculty, administrators, and trustees, and by promoting ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

**Cate School** In 1910, Curtis Cate founded what is now Cate School. Today's Cate School is a testament to spirit and to the commitment to service, scholarship, and character which continues to underlie all of our aspirations.

**Dunn School** As a college preparatory school with a focus on cultivating scholarship, leadership, teamwork, and compassion amongst its students, Dunn School is committed to a broad program of academics, athletics, arts, outdoor education, and community service within a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.

**Excel Charter Academy** Excel Charter Academy is the newest charter middle school in the PUC family. Excel Charter Academy holds the distinction of being the 100th charter school authorized by LAUSD. In that LAUSD has now authorized more charter schools than any other district in California, a huge celebration took place following Excel's petition approval.

**Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy** Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy's mission is to educate young women in a holistic college preparatory program, where their unique gifts are viewed as essential for our world, where they are nurtured by a vibrant community of faith and where truth and love are the highest values.

**Happy Valley School** The Happy Valley School philosophy is drawn from the vision of our founders, who believed that the environment which encourages the fullest development of student potential is one that affords the opportunity to explore creative as well as intellectual abilities. We believe in working together in a spirit of cooperation, not conformity, seeking to cultivate and express what is excellent in each.

**Idyllwild Arts Academy** Idyllwild's existence, not to mention its spectacular location, is due to the vision of its founders, Dr. Max Krone and his wife Beatrice. Their goal- "to promote and advance artistic and cultural development"- was realized with Idyllwild Arts Academy, the first independent boarding high school for the arts in the Western U.S.

**Julian Youth Academy** All girls residential boarding school in California helping troubled teen girls through firm but loving intervention.

**Midland School** Midland School strives to provide a unique college preparatory boarding school experience to a diverse student body at relatively low cost. Through study and

work, it teaches the value of a lifetime of learning, self-reliance, simplicity, responsibility to community and the environment, and love for the outdoors.

**Monte Vista Christian School** Monte Vista Christian School is not just a school, but an exciting journey; one that will endure for a lifetime. A well-qualified faculty, excellent curriculum and a healthy, picturesque environment will enhance every student's experience.

**Ojai Valley School** The philosophy of Ojai Valley School is contained in the motto "Integer Vitae," meaning wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, and, therefore, poise and strength of life. To accommodate this school philosophy, every effort is made to create an atmosphere for students and faculty that is conducive to learning and growing through the framework of a warm family environment.

**Rio Lindo Adventist Academy** Rio Lindo Adventist Academy offers an accredited, coeducational, Christian education with the mission "to provide the highest quality, private education, in the state of California, within a nurturing, Christian environment."

**San Domenico School** San Domenico School continues its 152 year history of offering challenging college preparatory educational opportunities to students of all faiths and backgrounds. Known for its high standards as an institution and its values-based education, the school is sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael operating with full accreditation.

**Santa Catalina School** Santa Catalina School, an independent accredited Catholic school founded in 1950, is somewhat unique in its configuration within the realm of independent schools. The thirty-six acre campus, just three miles from the center of Monterey, is home to both a coeducational day lower school (Preschool-Grade 8) with 268 students and an all-girls resident and day upper school (Grades 9-12) with 299 students.

**Southwestern Academy** Southwestern Academy offers a warm, friendly, safe and supportive environment for boys and girls to grow toward success. Founded in 1924, Southwestern is an accredited, not-for-profit, independent school offering classes for grades six through high school with a thorough college preparatory program affording students personal attention to prepare them for universities and for life.

**Squaw Valley Academy** Squaw Valley Academy is a California 6th-12th grade boarding school and day school founded in 1978 to offer a combination of college preparatory learning, outdoor education, and sports opportunities in the scenic California High Sierra at Lake Tahoe. SVA offers strong preparation for college as its central focus and many outdoor sports and activities as a catalyst for personal growth and achievement.

**St. Catherine's Military Academy** St. Catherine's, a Catholic school with a military tradition, academic program strives for excellence with caring and supportive teachers experienced in working with boys in a structured environment. St. Catherine's dormitory staff offers boys an environment that allows them to feel secure and cared for as well as provides an experience that fosters rich, lifelong relationships with their peers.

**St. Catherine's Military Academy** St. Catherine's is the only Catholic, international, military boarding school for grades K-8 in the U.S. For more than 100 years we have provided excellence in education in a nurturing and safe environment, instilling pride and self discipline in our cadets. Our graduates go on to the finest college prep schools in the

country.

**Stevenson School** Students at Stevenson have the responsibility to prepare for the college years by sharpening the mind, expanding academic knowledge, and stretching intellectual reach; love the arts, nature, recreation, and friends: and to respect yourself, and respect everyone else whose life touches yours.

**The Athenian School** Athenian provides an engaging, challenging education on this beautiful 75-acre campus at the base of Mt. Diablo near San Francisco in Northern California. Class size averages fifteen students, and virtually 100% of our graduates gain admission to outstanding four-year colleges. Athenian prepares a talented and diverse student body for the rigors of college and for a life of purpose and personal fulfillment.

**The Oak Grove School** The intent of the Oak Grove School is for students to develop the skills necessary to function in society, and at the same time to develop a foundation for inquiry into perennial questions of human life. Consistent with the views of its founder, the school does not subscribe to any creed or ideology. Rather, it assists students in the open-minded investigation of enduring human issues.

**The Thacher School** The Thacher School is a coeducational boarding high school located 85 miles north of Los Angeles. The School serves academically talented students who will benefit from a rigorous college preparatory experience. The faculty and students live and work closely together in a community in which cooperation, trust, honesty, and respect are the cornerstones of school life.

**The Webb Schools** The mission of Webb Schools is to provide a superior academic, athletic, and residential experience within the unique context of a coordinate school structure by offering the full benefit of living and learning in a diverse and supportive community. Principles and traditions of honor and leadership are reinforced through a climate of mutual trust, responsible and caring behavior, service to the school and the community, support of personal development and self-worth, and a strong appreciation of the common good.

**Villanova Preparatory School** In the Augustinian tradition, Villanova Preparatory School's mission is to graduate mature young adults of diverse backgrounds who express to the world the qualities of love, truth and community.

**Woodside Priory** What is a good education? A standard answer but an incomplete one is "highly qualified teachers, a rigorous curriculum, and evidence that the students learned their lessons well." A Woodside Priory education offers students three additional components: a discovery of personal ethics, a commitment to his or her community, and an informed sense of direction in his or her life.

Boarding Schools in Colorado--

**Association of Colorado Independent Schools** The Association of Colorado Independent Schools accredits, supports, and promotes independent schools in Colorado in a way that respects each school's mission and fosters excellence in teaching and learning. Independent schools vary widely in emphasis, style, extracurricular offerings, and academic expectations and experiences.

**Colorado Rocky Mountain School** For 50 years, Colorado Rocky Mountain School has educated the whole child. Within their balanced program of college-preparatory

academics, arts, community service, and athletics, students are prepared for college — and for life.

**Colorado Timberline Academy** Colorado Timberline Academy is a non-profit, college and outdoor oriented, co-educational, secondary boarding school dedicated to the enrichment and growth of each of its members in a community mountain setting. CTA strives to create academic and personal development by fostering individuality, freedom with responsibility, creativity, respect for the outdoors and global awareness.

**Excel Academy** Excel focuses on providing a learning environment for gifted and talented students; not only because such an environment is sorely needed in the community but because it provides an expectation for all students to achieve regardless of their native abilities.

**Fountain Valley School** Fountain Valley School is an independent, coeducational, college-preparatory, boarding and day school located just outside of Colorado Springs, Colorado. The panoramas of open prairie and snow-capped mountains are a continual source of personal inspiration, as well as a reminder of the opportunities and responsibilities that lie beyond the School's boundaries.

**Lowell Whiteman School** Lowell Whiteman school is a small, independent, co-educational secondary school for boarding and day students who wish to complement a college preparatory liberal arts curriculum with the excitement of wilderness and world explorations. High quality teaching, low student to teacher ratios, and supervised study are the cornerstones of the scholastic program.

**Monarch Center for Family Healing** Monarch Center for Family Healing is a wilderness therapy program and teen treatment center that provides help for youths and troubled teens between the ages of 10 and 18 that are struggling with their relationships with parents, friends, teachers, etc., delinquency, substance abuse, poor school performance, legal problems, etc.

Boarding Schools in Connecticut--

**Canterbury School** Canterbury is a college preparatory, coeducational boarding school for students in grades 9-12. The School prides itself on creating a community based on Catholic values. The School's educational environment fosters academic rigor, athletic development, artistic enrichment and spiritual growth.

**Glenholme School** The Glenholme School is a family choice boarding school for children with special needs situated on over 100 idyllic acres of Connecticut countryside. Children ages 10 to 18, at admission, who need a highly structured learning environment can prosper in this safe, nurturing school. It provides a value-based program to show students the way to academic success.

**Kent School** Students at Kent are part of a dynamic community of learning. Through a challenging academic program, with instruction provided by our talented faculty, Kent's strong college preparatory curriculum provides a classical liberal arts education, preparing students to go on to study at leading colleges and universities.

**Marianapolis Preparatory School** Marianapolis Preparatory School offers a rigorous program of studies comprised of honors and Advanced Placement courses, an average class size of 13, state-of-the-art technology labs, and a comprehensive advisor system.

Marianapolis also boasts competitive athletic teams and an extensive visual and performing arts program.

**Miss Porter's School** Miss Porter's School excels at preparing young women for college, for leadership, and for life. Their attentive, diverse boarding and day community provides a demanding curriculum — academic, artistic, athletic, and residential. They challenge their students to become informed, bold, resourceful, and ethical global citizens. They expect their graduates to shape a changing world.

**Pomfret School** Pomfret School maintains rigorous academic standards and holds high expectations of its students and faculty. The Pomfret community fosters an intellectual freedom that requires academic discipline and creates opportunities for hard work and play. A Pomfret education is not just the acquisition of information or learning other people's ideas, but it is also the process of growing as a person and as part of a community.

**Saint Thomas More School** Saint Thomas More School is an accredited college preparatory boarding school in the Catholic tradition for young men who have demonstrated intellectual ability yet have not realized their potential. Within a structured environment, we strive to motivate, nurture, and strengthen the intellectual, moral, physical, and social development of every student.

**Salisbury School** The mission of Salisbury School is to educate young men by inspiring in each student an enthusiasm for learning and the self-confidence needed for intellectual, spiritual, physical, and moral development. The close partnership of student and teacher encourages each young man to take pride in his accomplishments, to think critically and creatively, to participate actively in his own education, and to make responsible decisions for his future.

**South Kent School** Three principles define South Kent School: Simplicity of Life, Self-Reliance, and Directness of Purpose. South Kent School fosters these principles in a community, small in numbers, that provides a safe and supportive family structure.

**The Ethel Walker School** The Ethel Walker School, founded in 1911, is an independent, college preparatory boarding and day school for girls in grades 6 to 12. This diverse community of learners and friends strives to live according to the values of honor and excellence. Each young woman finds her unique voice and learns to contribute it to the pursuit of these values.

**The Grove School** The Grove School is a therapeutic boarding school for emotionally fragile teenagers. The Grove School is designed to meet the needs of adolescent boys and girls (11 years of age and older) with average or above average intelligence, who have been unsuccessful in making a satisfactory adjustment in their homes, in their schools, or in their social relationships.

Boarding Schools in Delaware--

**Cedars Academy** The Cedars Academy is a co-educational private preparatory school for students ages 10-18 who demonstrate a need for enhanced academic and social skill development. Our philosophy is that our students can develop stronger academic skills, and will benefit from a more secure and well-developed self-esteem. The program at Cedars is based upon our understanding of the comprehensive nature of the learning problems characteristic of the student we enroll, many who have been classified as

having learning disabilities or ADHD. These students tend to encounter difficulties in the classroom, with peers, and among the family because they process and perceive information differently than others. Traditional educational methods have put these students in a situation where failure is guaranteed. We offer a structured education in an intimate academic environment with small class sizes and individual attention. The academic curriculum at Cedars is designed to prepare students for a college-bound course throughout their studies. The faculty at Cedars teach that making an effort to work at each step, as best one can, is the way to be successful.

**Saint Andrew's School** The purpose of St. Andrew's School is to provide secondary education of a definitely Christian character at a minimum cost consistent with modern equipment and highest standards. As an Episcopal School, St. Andrew's is grounded in and upheld by our Episcopal identity, welcoming persons regardless of their religious background.

Boarding Schools in District of Columbia--

**Universal Ballet Academy** The Universal Ballet Academy is a place where students work together to realize their potential in their art - classical ballet. They push their limits and make new friends for life. Our staff is always there trying to help every step of the way. Students participate in the development and structuring of activities, events and excursions by joining planning committees of their choice.

Boarding Schools in Florida--

**Admiral Farragut Academy** The Academy is America's first preparatory school with Naval training. It is an independent coeducational day and boarding school (both 5 & 7 day boarding) that has earned the title of Honor Naval School through our Naval Junior ROTC program. Student population is made up of grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12.

**All Saints' Episcopal School** All Saints' Episcopal School in historic Vicksburg, Mississippi exists to nurture the gifts that make your child unique. Through highly individualized attention, we can help your child to succeed in the classroom like never before, which is the surest way for your child to reach his or her potential in college and beyond.

**Montverde Academy** Montverde Academy, located in Montverde, Florida (just outside of Orlando), is an independent, coeducational boarding and day school, offering an enriching day and boarding program for seventh grade through 12th grade. The three principles of knowledge, character, and community have guided five generations of Montverde Academy students since the school was established in 1912.

**Saint Andrew's School** Saint Andrew's School alumni will be healthy, responsible, and accomplished individuals of honor, integrity, and respect, who have achieved academic excellence. The school continues to cultivate a morally courageous community of learners who seek and find the best of the human spirit in themselves and others.

**The Bolles School** The Bolles School prepares students for college and life by inspiring achievement, integrity, confidence, and compassion in an academic community dedicated to nurturing mind, body, and soul. Accordingly, Bolles provides an unequalled breadth of opportunities and experiences which enable every student to optimize his or her unique interests, abilities, and talents.

**The North Broward Preparatory Schools** A Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

(SACS) and Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) accredited college-preparatory independent school of 2,100 students in grades PK-12 serving the Palm Beach and Broward Counties of Southern Florida since 1957.

**Vanguard School** The mission of the Vanguard School is to provide an individualized program in a nurturing environment which enables students to develop to their fullest capabilities: Academically, Socially and Personally.  
Boarding Schools in Georgia--

**Brandon Hall** Brandon Hall provides both one-on-one and small group college preparatory classes for students who, for a variety of reasons, have not been achieving their potential. Emphasizing personal attention, organization, structure, accountability, the ordering of priorities, applied study skills, and multi-sensory instruction, the school seeks to motivate each student to fulfill the school's motto, ad renovandum ac florendum, to begin anew and flourish.

**Brenau Academy** Brenau Academy was founded in 1928 on the campus of Brenau Women's College by Dr. H.J. Pearce, who saw a need to provide exemplary secondary education to young women. Brenau Academy's program is designed to foster the growth of an open and inquiring mind and to prepare graduates for admission to college.

**Darlington School** Darlington School, an independent, coeducational, college preparatory school, serves high school-aged boarders and day students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

**Hidden Lake Academy** Hidden Lake Academy's mission is to provide a learning experience for students that have not succeeded academically or socially in other settings. They address the development of a whole child. They facilitate intellectual development through academic challenge and support; emotional and social growth through supportive group therapy; spiritual insight through a variety of inspirational opportunities; and physical development through recreational and wilderness based experiences.

**Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School** Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's mission is to create an environment of order, truth, caring, and concern where the students of diverse economic and cultural backgrounds learn to live together with new understanding, and prepare for college by beginning the habit of life long learning, and personal and spiritual development.

**Riverside Military Academy** Riverside Military Academy, one of the nation's finest college preparatory academies for young men in grades seven through twelve, strives to provide a supportive and challenging educational environment that fosters scholarly competence and intellectual curiosity, enhances spiritual and physical fitness, and develops leadership skills and the strength of character necessary for success in college and in life.

**Tallulah Falls School** At Tallulah Falls School the quality of the academic program and the academic success of students are priorities that form the foundation for the School. A dedicated and highly qualified faculty, outstanding facilities, a broad and challenging curriculum, small classes, and eager, motivated students all contribute to the accomplishment of academic goals.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:44AM (-08:00)

## U.S. Boarding Schools: Hawaii to Louisiana

Thursday, December 25, 2008

Boarding Schools in Hawaii--

**Hawaii Preparatory Academy** The Hawaii Preparatory Academy is the premier college preparatory boarding and day school for the Pacific region. Its character and personality derive from six emphases: 1)putting students first, 2)striving for excellence, 3)concern for the individual, 4)accepting, appreciating, and seeking challenges, 5)being consistent, and 6)exemplifying the highest moral and ethical behavior. Programs emphasize the intellectual, physical, moral, and spiritual development of students to help them achieve their highest potential as individuals and members of society.

Boarding Schools in Idaho--

**Academy Ranches** A private, therapeutic residential program on a ranch setting for at-risk and struggling boys ages 12 to 17. Academy Ranches treatment philosophy is centered on the healing ability of horses, hard work, and education.

Boarding Schools in Illinois--

**Brehm Preparatory School** Brehm's mission is to empower students with complex learning disabilities to recognize and optimize their full potential. By fostering a family environment where educational, social, and emotional needs of each student are addressed in a focused, holistic program, through partnership among staff, students, parents, board, and the community.

**Broadview Academy** Broadview Academy is a Seventh-day Adventist residential high school located in La Fox, Illinois. Over the span of 90 years, more than 3,000 graduates have left the halls of learning to serve around the world.

**Glenwood School** Glenwood is a safe-place for kids to live, learn and grow! With campuses in Glenwood and St. Charles, Illinois, Glenwood is a preventative residential-educational program serving low-income, mostly single-parent families facing difficult circumstances.

**Lake Forest Academy** Lake Forest Academy, founded in 1857, is an independent, coeducational, boarding/day, college preparatory school, grades nine through twelve, strives to embody in its practices and to cultivate in its students excellence of character, scholarship, citizenship, and responsibility.

**Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart** Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart, founded in 1858, is an independent, Catholic, boarding and day, college preparatory school for young women, grades 9-12, who wish to pursue a course of study committed to academic excellence within the context of a faith-based community.



#### Boarding Schools in Indiana--

**Culver Military Academy** The Culver Academies are independent college preparatory boarding schools comprised of Culver Military Academy and Culver Girls Academy. Henry Harrison Culver founded Culver Military Academy in 1894 "for the purpose of thoroughly preparing young men for the best colleges, scientific schools and businesses of America."

**Howe Military School** The mission of Howe Military School is to prepare young men and women for advanced education while developing the individual character required for success in any endeavor. We accomplish this mission through a three-pronged approach to education: Spiritual, Intellectual, and Physical, with the goal of the attainment of a clean mind in a sound body.

**LaLumiere School** For almost a half-century, LaLumiere School has provided a comprehensive college-preparatory education for qualified young men and women from a rich diversity of backgrounds. It seeks to develop character, scholarship, and faith, while remaining both independently accredited and faithful to its Catholic heritage.

#### Boarding Schools in Iowa--

**Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment** Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment was founded by His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to provide Consciousness-Based education for the preschool through secondary levels. Consciousness-Based education enlivens the whole brain physiology of the student, thereby providing the basis for the experience of higher states of consciousness and enlightenment. This holistic development of consciousness brings fulfillment to the study of all academic disciplines and provides the basis for success in the student's own life and for society as a whole.

**Scattergood Friends School** In addition to providing a solid foundation for higher education, Scattergood is a learning community that fosters creativity in the arts, the practical application of knowledge through work and service, and cooperation and enjoyment in living with others. Scattergood is guided by the values of integrity, simplicity, and harmony with others and with nature.

#### Boarding Schools in Kansas--

**Maur Hill-Mount Academy** Maur Hill-Mount Academy is a Catholic, college preparatory school educating young men and women in the Benedictine tradition of prayer, work, and love of learning. Through emphasis on loyalty, obedience, honesty, humility, and good works, we help local, national, and international youths mature as individuals who respect and care for others and understand their world.

**St. John's Military School** St. John's continues to train young men to harbor the cherished qualities of honesty, loyalty and duty. Their vision for the future is to follow in the footsteps of the founders of the school by providing a unique place for young men to learn and incorporate self-discipline and respect, while keeping our academics current and practical in an ever-changing world.

**Thomas More Prep-Marian** Thomas More Prep-Marian offers an off-campus residential program for young men and women. School officials review and evaluate each

application for the residency programs. Applicants for these programs must meet a criteria.

Boarding Schools in Kentucky--

**Oakdale Christian Academy** A Christian boarding school, Oakdale offers students a rigorous academic environment, along with a chance to grow spiritually, and a rich extracurricular program. In our small classes, teachers challenge and encourage students to excel academically, and through the living and learning environment students are directed toward a Christ-centered life of service.

**Oneida Baptist Institute** Oneida Baptist Institute is a Christian Boarding school for students in grades 6-12. OBI's mission is to help students who need a new beginning in academics, relationships and life. Any student who is emotionally and physically able to live away from home in a boarding school environment is probably appropriate for Oneida.

Boarding Schools in Louisiana--

**Academy of the Sacred Heart** Enriched by a 200-year tradition of teaching, within a national and international network of Sacred Heart schools, the Academy of the Sacred Heart prepares students to become confident, faith-filled, and effective leaders of tomorrow. The very intention of Sacred Heart education is to educate the "whole child."

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:55AM (-08:00)

## U.S. Boarding Schools: Maine to North Dakota

Thursday, December 25, 2008

Boarding Schools in Maine--

**Carrabassett Valley Academy** Carrabassett Valley Academy's unique co-curricular programming, combines individualized academic study and athletic training for alpine skiing, freestyle and big mountain skiing, plus snowboarding. CVA has earned a reputation for turning out winning athletes at all levels in addition to motivated scholars and community leaders. Whether your dream is one of Olympic glory, scholastic achievement, or civic leadership, CVA will provide the environment for you to maximize your potential on and off the slopes.

**Kents Hill School** Kents Hill School is a coeducational college-preparatory school for students in grades nine through twelve and postgraduate. Located just 15 minutes outside of Maine's capital city of Augusta, the nearly 600-acre campus is on the summit of a high, rolling hill that overlooks the beautiful valleys and lakes of the Belgrade region.

**Maine Central Institute** Maine Central Institute pledges to provide a rigorous, comprehensive educational program to a multicultural student body with a wide range of abilities and interests. In a safe and caring atmosphere, students will acquire knowledge, self-esteem, social responsibility, and the critical thinking and communication skills necessary for global citizenship and lifelong learning.

**The Deck House School** Overlooking the Sheepscot River in Edgecomb, Maine, The Deck House School is a small college-prep boarding school for boys who have struggled in more traditional settings.

Boarding Schools in Maryland--

**Excel Academy Charter School** Excel Academy Charter School prepares middle school students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

**Garrison Forest School** An independent Day and Boarding college preparatory school for girls with a coeducational Two-year-old through Kindergarten program, Garrison Forest School is dedicated to the intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, moral, physical, and spiritual growth of its students. The School's primary commitment is to develop and maintain a strong academic program designed to foster a spirit of inquiry, intellectual independence, and enthusiasm for learning.

**Georgetown Preparatory School** Georgetown Preparatory School is an independent, Jesuit college-preparatory school for young men (grades 9-12). Founded in 1789 by America's first Catholic bishop, Prep is the nation's oldest Jesuit school and the only Jesuit boarding school. Prep's academically rigorous liberal arts curriculum is based in the educational philosophy of Jesuit founder, St. Ignatius Loyola.

**Georgetown Preparatory School** Georgetown Preparatory School is an independent, Jesuit college-preparatory school for young men (grades 9-12). Founded in 1789 by America's first Catholic bishop, Prep is the nation's oldest Jesuit school and the only Jesuit boarding school. Prep's academically rigorous liberal arts curriculum is based in the educational philosophy of Jesuit founder, St. Ignatius Loyola.

**Oldfields School** Oldfields School is committed to the intellectual and moral development of young women. In a culture of kindness and mutual respect, they encourage each student to make the most of her academic and personal potential. They seek to guide each student to grow in character, confidence, and knowledge by encouraging her to embrace the values of personal honesty, intellectual curiosity, and social responsibility.

**Saint James School** The Mission of Saint James School is to prepare young men and women for academic success in college, and to challenge and inspire them to be leaders for good in the world. We seek to do this within a small and familial residential community which values the moral and spiritual development of our students.

**Sandy Spring Friends School** Sandy Spring Friends School provides a challenging academic curriculum, enriched arts program, inclusive athletics, and service opportunities promote intellectual excellence and strength of character. Recognizing the unique worth of each person, the School strives to develop individual talents and foster caring and effective citizens of the world.

**St. Timothy's School** St. Timothy's School motto, "To seek the truth and uphold it, to be worthy of trust, and to be kind" is the bedrock of a St. Tim's education, where tradition and values blend with academic and residential programs. St. Tim's is a place where excellence, intellectual curiosity, and independent thinking are celebrated.

Boarding Schools in Massachusetts--

**Academy at Swift River** Located in Western Massachusetts, surrounded by the scenic

Berkshire Mountains, the Academy at Swift River specializes in working with adolescents ages 13-18 (Grades 9-12) having social, academic and familial difficulties. The Academy at Swift River combines cognitive and emotive approaches in order to allow children time for natural growth within the classroom, the family, the environment and themselves. The 14 month program also provides an overseas community service experience as part of the curriculum.

**Brooks School** Brooks is a college preparatory school that values academic excellence. Its educational environment is challenging but supportive, helping students to become the best they can be.

**Cushing Academy** Cushing Academy is dedicated to educating the mind and shaping the character of young men and women. They exist for students and their personal and academic growth. In a community that is academically and culturally diverse, we challenge each individual and support excellence in every aspect of the learning process. They offer a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, teaching skills that build and instilling values that endure.

**Dana Hall School** At Dana Hall School, they are committed to fostering excellence in academics, the arts, and athletics within a vibrant, caring community. With emphasis on integrity, leadership, diversity, and service as well as on respect for self and others, they provide their students with a unique opportunity to prepare themselves for the challenges and choices they will face as women and citizens of the world.

**Excel Academy Charter School** Excel Academy Charter School is a new, public, charter, middle school that serves the communities of Boston and Chelsea. Excel Academy Charter School prepares 6th through 8th grade students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

**Fay School** Fay School's programs rest on a well-tested and responsive structure in which challenging yet realistic expectations, combined with the teaching of moral principles, insistence on disciplined behavior, and the cultivation of responsible work habits help children develop the strengths and self-confidence necessary for success.

**Groton School** Groton's aims include the intellectual, moral and physical development of its students in grades seven through twelve towards preparation for both college and "the active work of life". The school's mission has never been narrowly to prepare students for college, but rather always to provide an experience which, while academically rigorous, goes far beyond college requirements, addressing important personal aspects of growth and maturity.

**Hillside School** Hillside School is an independent boarding and day school for middle school boys, grades 5 through 9. The School's mission is to help young adolescent boys develop in their formative years. Our students develop academic and social skills while building confidence and maturity.

**Linden Hill School** Linden Hill is a junior boarding school with an academic school year program which accepts boys between 9 and 15 years old. The Linden Hill School Faculty is diligent in their efforts to present a curriculum that is effective in reaching each student, addressing both academic and intellectual abilities. The students have unlimited potential and it is our goal to help them reach those heights.

**Miss Hall's School for Girls** Miss Hall's School mission is to provide a school committed to preparing young women for full and satisfying lives in the modern world by incorporating experiential learning into a comprehensive, college preparatory education, adapting students' programs to build on their strengths.

**St. Mark's School** St. Mark's provides a challenging liberal arts curriculum that prepares students to be thoughtful, well-informed, lifelong learners with open, independent, and inquiring minds capable of making sense of the past, the present, and the future.

**The Bement School** The Bement School provides an education based on time-honored school traditions and values for children in kindergarten through ninth grade, day and boarding. From the classrooms to the dorms, we live and learn as a family, while encouraging responsibility for our own work and actions. Bement actively seeks an academically diverse, international, and multi-cultural student body. Students and adults at Bement work together to create a climate of acceptance and kindness.

**The Winchendon School** The Winchendon philosophy is that most young people can succeed when surrounded by an atmosphere of caring attention to their individual needs. To that end, the school offers academic programs that are closely tailored to each student's strengths and weaknesses in a traditional environment designed to encourage moral and spiritual growth.

**Walnut Hill School** Walnut Hill School is a private, coeducational, boarding and day high school for the arts, for grades 9–12 (ages 13–18). In conjunction with intensive arts training in ballet, music, theater, visual art, and writing, Walnut Hill offers comprehensive and rigorous academic curriculum in all college-preparatory subjects. In addition to the high school program, Walnut Hill also offers intensive summer study and afternoon and weekend community youth arts instruction.

Boarding Schools in Michigan--

**Cranbrook Schools** In addition to a challenging and age-appropriate curriculum for every stage of academic development, Cranbrook offers services, programs, activities, and special events to enhance and augment each student's educational experience. From their proven academic approach to an outstanding athletic program students have many opportunities to seek out the finest in themselves.

**Interlochen Center for the Arts** Interlochen is an educational institution for talented and motivated young people which emphasizes excellence in artistic and academic achievement and arts presentation.

**Saint Mary's Preparatory** Saint Mary's Preparatory is a four year secondary program of pre-college studies in a disciplined environment preparing young men for future study and careers of service. The administration, teachers, and coaches work to develop each individual's talents and abilities at his own pace and in his own way.

**The Leelanau School** The Leelanau School offers a comprehensive academic, social and physical development program. Our faculty are versatile, gifted, dedicated and have chosen to teach at Leelanau. They believe what one can accomplish is directly connected to the surroundings.

Boarding Schools in Minnesota--

**Cotter Schools** Cotter High School is a faith based Catholic community dedicated to the

teaching and to the living of the values of Christianity in order to develop the whole person. To these ends, we stress three fundamental aspects of education: spirituality, academics, and student life.

**Saint Croix Lutheran High School** Saint Croix Lutheran High School has as its mission "educating the total student, spiritually, intellectually, and physically in a caring Christian family environment." In keeping with this goal, we strive to meet the following three objectives: Spiritual Growth, Intellectual Growth, and Physical Growth.

**Saint John's Preparatory School** Saint John's Prep School's emphasis on academic rigor and spiritual growth attracts students from around the world as they seek the best possible preparation for college. The school shares a campus with Saint John's University creating enhancements and added benefits for our students.

**Shattuck-St. Mary's** Shattuck-St. Mary's School is an Episcopal, college preparatory boarding and day school enrolling students in grades six through 12 plus a post-graduate program. The school, located in Faribault, Minnesota, 50 miles south of the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, occupies a 250-acre campus on the bluffs of the Straight River.

Boarding Schools in Mississippi--

**All Saints' Episcopal School** All Saints' Episcopal School in historic Vicksburg, Mississippi exists to nurture the gifts that make your child unique. Through highly individualized attention, we can help your child to succeed in the classroom like never before, which is the surest way for your child to reach his or her potential in college and beyond.

**Chamberlain-Hunt Academy** Chamberlain-Hunt Academy is committed to its mission: "Knowledge and Wisdom in Submission to God." The staff and faculty believe that the Triune God revealed in the Bible as the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of all things is the one true God and the sole source of all truth. Consequently, true education must focus on knowing that God. True education must be an active, ongoing part of a living faith. Therefore, Chamberlain-Hunt endeavors to provide true education to help Cadets understand God's world and his purpose for their lives.

**Saint Stanislaus College** Through its philosophy, admissions policy, curriculum and facilities, Saint Stanislaus College strives to create an atmosphere for holistic learning and self-growth. This atmosphere provides each student the opportunity to realize his potential and to develop the healthy attitudes and responsible behavior that will permit him to pursue continued studies and to assume his place in society as a concerned Christian gentleman, a Man of Character.

Boarding Schools in Missouri--

**Chaminade College Preparatory School** Chaminade College Preparatory School is an independent Catholic school for young men in grades six through twelve. The mission of Chaminade is to provide a holistic and high caliber education, grounded in faith, that prepares its students for success in college and in life.

**Missouri Military Academy** Missouri Military Academy's motto – "Look like a Soldier, Act like a Gentleman, Study like a Scholar" - reflects its mission to train young men to become productive citizens of the world with an ethical compass. The structured, nurturing environment helps cadets in each school focus on improving academic performance, personal accountability and social skills that will lead to their success in

college and in life.

**Principia** Principia is a school for Christian Scientists on two campuses in the St. Louis, Missouri, area. Programs for infants through seniors in high school are located in West St. Louis County. Fifty miles away on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River at Elsah, Illinois, is Principia College.

**Saint Paul Lutheran** The mission of Saint Paul Lutheran High is to provide curricular and co-curricular experiences in a Christian environment that equip students for joyful, faithful service to Christ and His world.

**St. Joseph Institute** St. Joseph Institute is an independent, private, day and residential Catholic school that serves severely and profoundly hearing-impaired children ages birth through eighth grade without regard to race, religion or gender.

**Thomas Jefferson School** The mission of Thomas Jefferson School is to give its students the strongest possible academic background, responsibility for their own learning, a concern for other people, and the resources to live happily as adults and become active contributors to society.

**Wentworth Military Academy** Wentworth Military Academy is a college-preparatory secondary boarding school and junior college dedicated to providing students the academic skills, intellectual habits, leadership qualities and character traits needed to excel at the college and university level.

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### **Agape Boarding School**

With the sincere desire to help the lives of troubled children, the Agapé Boarding School (a ministry of Agapé Baptist Church), was born. It was founded in April, 1990, by James and Kathy Clemensen, along with their son and daughter-in-law, Bryan and Kirsty Clemensen. The ministry first began in the Clemensen's home. It was just a year and a half after taking in their first boys, that their enrollment had grown to 14 students. Their home/school had outgrown its space. By October of 1991, the opportunity arose for the school to move to Othello, Washington, onto a decommissioned Air Force base, where the school quickly grew to 160 students.

Early in 1995, Agapé Boarding School realized they needed to search for a different, more desirable location. In May of '95, the size of the school was reduced to 30 students as their search for a new campus began. Finally, in April of 1996, the "ideal" location was found, and Agapé school was moved to Stockton, Missouri, where it opened with an enrollment of 40 students. In only one year, the school's attendance had grown to 110 students.

On the fateful morning of June 6, 1998, the Agapé school dining hall, the new chapel, and the office complex, caught fire and burned to the ground. Thankfully, no one was injured, and our student dorm was not damaged. By the grace of God, within one year of the fire, a beautiful new building was constructed, rising up from where there had once been only a pile of ashes.

Truly God has been good to us. With His help, Agape's plans are to continue to grow, with the goal of taking in over 200 students in the coming months. Agapé Boarding

School is a ministry of Agapé Baptist Church. The Pastor and Board are the final authority on all matters.

Boarding Schools in Montana--

**Montana Academy** Montana Academy is a therapeutic boarding school dedicated to helping teenagers in crisis and their families. Situated on a ranch in the Lost Prairie Valley, Montana Academy is committed to quality service, education, and care.

**COLT - Christian Outdoor Leadership Training** The Christian Outdoor Leadership Training program (C.O.L.T.) provides troubled teens help with overcoming the conflicts they are struggling with by sharing the Christian life in an atmosphere of outdoor adventure and a focus on Christian character development. COLT interrupts this downward spin with adventurous and challenging activities led by our experienced, professional staff.

**Hope Ranch** Hope Ranch is nestled in the heart of Northwest Montana. Hope Ranch nourishes healing, inspires hope, instills values, and builds integrity. Their mission is to rescue girls from destructive lifestyles, heal them in a safe and caring Christian environment, and prepare them for healthy, productive lives.

**Summit Preparatory School** Summit Preparatory School is a private, non-profit therapeutic boarding school for youth ages 14-17 with emotional, academic and behavioral problems. The program combines a college preparatory high school curriculum with a professional treatment program. Expert dedicated and professional staff, a high staff-to-student ratio and carefully designed facility promote a safe, comfortable and nurturing community. Summit is the only special purpose school in the state of Montana to be accredited by the Office of Public Instruction. The campus's 500 wooded acres and geographic location allow easy access to a variety of outdoor recreational activities, while remaining close to the airport and health care services. Duration of stay is 12-24 months.

Boarding Schools in Nebraska--

**Mount Michael Benedictine High School** Mount Michael Benedictine High School is a Catholic, college-preparatory residential high school. At Mount Michael the core of the academic program enables students to become inquiring learners, appreciative of their heritage, responsive and committed to the challenges of the future.

**Nebraska Boys Ranch** Nebraska Boys Ranch is a Group Home serving boys ages 12 to 18. The home is located on a working cattle ranch in the beautiful Sandhills in the western section of the Nebraska Panhandle.

**Nebraska Christian Schools** Nebraska Christian Schools is an inter-denominational school located on its historic campus in Central City, Nebraska. Providing an environment for quality Christian education enables each student to grow in a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ and achieve healthy personal and relational development.

Boarding Schools in New Hampshire--

**Cardigan Mountain School** Cardigan Mountain School seeks to enroll students of good character and academic promise who will contribute to and benefit from the broad range of academic and extracurricular opportunities available. Cardigan Mountain School



believes that much learning goes on among peers and we strive for a student population that is diverse in geographic, economic, social, ethnic and racial backgrounds.

**Holderness School** The academic program at Holderness is geared to providing a strong preparation for all colleges and universities. Throughout the curriculum, we emphasize reading with comprehension and writing with clarity. In mathematics and the physical sciences, as well as the social sciences and languages, we focus on clear, consistent thinking and applying the principles of logic.

**Phillips Exeter Academy** Phillips Exeter Academy, a co-educational residential school serving students in grades 9 through 12, and post-graduate level. Exeter has a tradition of academic excellence, a distinguished faculty, and a long history of educating young people to find their place in the world. An Exeter education prepares students to use the skills learned at school in all life's endeavors. Exeter is a life-changing experience, challenging and fun. It asks a great deal from every student - higher standards, greater expectations, and deeper engagement not only in the world of ideas, but also in the life of the community.

**St. Paul's School** St. Paul's School is committed to educating the whole person and preparing students to make contributions to a changing and challenging world with the philosophy that defines education as all of the structured experiences in which students participate: course work, athletics, activities, and our life together as a fully residential school.

**The Meeting School** The Meeting School (TMS) offers a strong program of academic and experiential learning. Community life is based on traditional Quaker values of respect for the integrity of individuals, peaceful resolution of conflict, stewardship of the land, the dignity of physical work, the importance of community process, and the persistent practice of intellectual and spiritual openness.

**Tilton School** Tilton School challenges students to embrace and navigate a world marked by diversity and change. Through the quality of human relationships, Tilton School's faculty cultivates in its students the curiosity, the skills, the knowledge and understanding, the character and the integrity requisite for the passionate pursuit of lifelong personal success and service.

**White Mountain School** WMS provides an environment for serious academic training and personal growth within a community-based setting in the White Mountains of northern New Hampshire. Students experience a total living/learning curriculum based on a three-part ecology: ecology of the human spirit, ecology of one's community, and ecology of the physical world.

**Wolfeboro: The Summer Boarding School** Since 1910, Wolfeboro has offered a traditional boarding school program combined with constructive scholastic work in an exceptional lakeside setting. All courses are offered for credit. An individualized curriculum emphasizes study skills, organization, motivation and confidence. Students take courses for credit, review, or preview in English; grammar; literature; writing; vocabulary; reading; mathematics; SAT prep; science; history; ESL; and foreign languages. A class size of 4-6 students ensures a front row seat and productivity. School offerings include athletic and recreational activities.

Boarding Schools in New Jersey--

**Blair Academy** Blair was established in 1848 by John I. Blair. Some of their buildings date back to the mid-1800's, and the school boasts traditions that have been part of their experience for over a century. Blair is and will continue to be a school of about 400 girls and boys and 70 faculty members. Their size plays a crucial role in the spirit of our school as they blend supervision and structure with opportunity and independence.

**The American Boychoir** The mission of The American Boychoir is to sustain and move forward with a distinctively American voice the one-thousand-year-old boychoir school tradition. The American Boychoir is committed to being the finest choir of its kind in the nation and among the finest in the world. The American Boychoir achieves this each year by recruiting and training talented choristers from across the country.

**The Pennington School** The Pennington School faculty and administration foster the individual growth of students through excellence in teaching and a diversity of programs that prepare students to meet the demands of college study; to live a life of integrity, intelligent reflection, and service to others; and to be responsible citizens of the global community.

Boarding Schools in New Mexico--

**Navajo Preparatory School** The only Navajo-sanctioned, college-preparatory school for Native Americans, Navajo Preparatory School recruits some of the best and brightest students of the Navajo Nation. Looking to the future, the school offers students a challenging, innovative curriculum in science, math, computers, and other traditional academic subjects.

**San Cristobal Ranch Academy** The San Cristobal Ranch Academy is a transitional learning center, where students participate in classroom academics and field-based experiential education. The primary focus of these classes is to teach young men (18 and over) important life skills to further develop their minds, bodies, and spirits.

Boarding Schools in New York--

**Cascadilla School** Cascadilla School was founded in 1870 as a preparatory school for Cornell University. The philosophy of education at Cascadilla is to provide a flexible, accelerated program within which each individual can achieve his or her goals in preparation for a successful college career. This learning experience emphasizes the steady development of an adult viewpoint and a mature approach to life.

**Hoosac School** Hoosac School's mission remains true to its founder's philosophy: to develop the character, spirit, mind, and body of its students, to foster independence and self discipline, and to motivate them to develop to their full potential for success in college and for full, productive, and intelligent lives.

**Houghton Academy** The mission of Houghton Academy is to teach and nurture its students so that each young person makes a personal commitment to Christ; understands the importance of a life of service; grows toward a mature understanding of our society, history, and natural world; develops in physical ability and strength; and exhibits appropriate social courtesies.

**Keio Academy of New York** Keio Academy of New York was established in 1990 by the Keio Private School System of Japan primarily to meet the needs of Japanese living overseas. Inheriting traditions established by Yukichi Fukuzawa, Keio's founder, Keio Academy of New York is a unique international private academic institution.

**Masters School** The mission of the Masters School is to provide the challenging academic environment that, for over a century, has encouraged critical, creative and independent habits of thought as well as a lifelong passion for learning. The Masters School promotes and celebrates academic achievement, artistic development, ethical awareness, technological literacy, athletic endeavor and personal growth.

**New York Military Academy** The mission of New York Military Academy is to develop all cadets in mind, body and character to prepare them for further education and to be effective leaders and responsible citizens.

**Oakwood Friends School** Oakwood Friends School, guided by Quaker principles, educates and strengthens young people for lives of conscience, compassion and accomplishment. Students experience a challenging curriculum within a diverse community, dedicated to nurturing the spirit, the scholar, the artist and the athlete in each person.

**Redemption Christian Academy** Redemption Christian Academy's objective is to provide an environment conducive to learning. As one of four remaining historically African American boarding schools, RCA has produced graduates of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

**Saint Thomas Choir School** Saint Thomas Choir School is a fully accredited academic institution for boys from eight to fourteen, with a study program of English, mathematics, history, science, art, Latin, music theory, and instrumental instruction on such instruments as piano, violin, viola, cello, flute, and trumpet.

**Stony Brook School** The Stony Brook School is an independent college preparatory school (grades 7-12) that exists to challenge young men and women to know Jesus Christ as Lord, to love others as themselves, and to grow in knowledge and skill, in order that they may serve the world through their character and leadership.

**The Gow School** The Gow School is the world's preeminent college preparatory school for dyslexic young men. The core component of Gow's unique program for remediating dyslexic learners is called Reconstructive Language. RL is a multi-sensory presentation of language that is reinforced throughout the curriculum. In order to develop mature individuals who understand the importance of citizenship, Gow's academic program extends far beyond the classroom.

**Union Springs Academy** Union Springs Academy is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian school where people work together to promote wholeness in a physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe environment. Christ's example is reflected in our commitment to academic excellence and Christian service.

Boarding Schools in North Carolina--

**New Leaf Academy** New Leaf is a therapeutic boarding school that offers a safe, nurturing environment for struggling middle school age girls. At the time of admission, our students are over 10 and under 14 years of age. Our 18-21 month program teaches positive self-expression, responsibility and helps troubled young girls and their families transition to a better place.

**Stone Mountain School** Stone Mountain School, a therapeutic boarding school for boys located in the mountain setting of a 100-acre campus in western North Carolina, serves

boys ages 11 to 16 with issues such as attention deficit disorder and learning disabilities. Stone Mountain School offers numerous outdoor activities that have both a recreation and therapeutic benefit. The beautiful yet rustic surrounding serves as an experiential classroom where the natural and logical consequences of daily living are clear and understood. The program offers group therapy and academics through an adventure-based experiential model. Stone Mountain School creates a caring yet highly structured community by limiting the living and academic group size. Staff teaches and mentor basic living skills while implementing the Level System of Personal Development that is at the core of assisting young men toward responsible, self-managing behavior.

**Talisman Summer Camps** Talisman Summer Program caters to youth, ages 9-17, with issues such as attention deficit disorder and learning disabilities who would excel in a residential program that focuses on establishing positive routines and provides diverse daily activities. Our activities provide a fun environment in which campers can develop self-esteem, trust in self and others, and the basics of good decision-making. We believe that the skills learned during our programming will later transfer to home, school, and in other social settings.

**Asheville School** Every action undertaken by faculty and staff at Asheville School supports their mission: To prepare our students for college and for life, and to provide an atmosphere in which all members of a diverse school community appreciate and strive for excellence - an atmosphere which nurtures character and fosters the development of mind, body, and spirit.

**Aulderm Academy** Aulderm Academy is a college-preparatory boarding school with a personal growth curriculum that offers a traditional boarding school environment with challenging but supportive academics and a personal growth program designed to prepare young women for college matriculation and independence.

**Christ School** Christ School is a college preparatory school affiliated with the Episcopal Church. Our mission is to produce educated men of good character, prepared for both scholastic achievement in college and productive citizenship in adult society.

**Saint Mary's School** Founded in 1842, Saint Mary's School in Raleigh, North Carolina is an independent, Episcopal, college-preparatory, boarding and day school, dedicated to academic excellence and personal achievement for young women in grades 9-12.

**Salem Academy** Salem Academy is committed to providing an atmosphere in which the intellectual, spiritual, social, physical, and personal growth of each student is fostered. Ever mindful of their Christian heritage and commitment to education as an independent school, they pledge to retain and nurture those values which promote growth and are important in society.

**The Patterson School** The Patterson School is dedicated to providing family-oriented college-preparatory education for the development of the whole person. A Patterson education develops skills, knowledge, experience, and attitudes required for a student to get into the college of choice and to be successful and happy in his or her future life.  
Boarding Schools in North Dakota--

**Oak Grove Lutheran School** Oak Grove Lutheran School's mission is to express God's love by nurturing young men and women for academic achievement, lifelong Christian commitment and loving service throughout the world.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:03AM (-08:00)

## U.S. Boarding Schools: Ohio to Wyoming

Thursday, December 25, 2008

Boarding Schools in Ohio--

**The Andrews School** An Andrews Education is a sound and exciting educational investment. For over eighty years, our personalized approach to women's education and our size, offerings, and facilities have combined to insure that each student at The Andrews School receives an exceptional education. Evidence confirms that an all-girls school provides numerous advantages that help girls to realize their potential and fulfill their aspirations.

**Excel Academy** Excel Academy is a private non-profit school for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Excel Academy specializes in individualized services to meet each student's unique social, emotional and educational needs. Excel Academy's services include tutoring, credit completion, traditional school programming, high school diploma completion and summer programming.

**Gilmour Academy** As a Catholic School in the Holy Cross tradition, Gilmour Academy has chosen as its mission the education of the mind and the heart. Gilmour instills in each student a strong sense of personal self-worth through personal achievement. The world our students will soon lead will require them to be persons of great courage and moral stamina, with an enthusiastic, lifelong desire to learn.

**Olney Friends School** Olney Friends School, a co-educational boarding school for grades 9 through 12, provides an intellectually challenging college preparatory program in a supportive Friends community that promotes traditional Quaker values such as integrity and simplicity, while encouraging freedom of expression, creative thinking and acceptance of individual differences.

**The Grand River Academy** The Grand River Academy is a traditional nonsectarian, non-military, boarding high school whose primary goal is to prepare boys for a successful college education. The Academy is located one hour east of Cleveland, Ohio.

**Western Reserve Academy** Western Reserve Academy offers an outstanding education to talented, motivated students and has a long tradition of placing its graduates at the most selective schools in the country. Reserve is an open and caring community that shares a set of fundamental values: excellence, integrity, compassion.

Boarding Schools in Oregon--

**Mount Bachelor Academy** Located outside of Bend, Oregon, just east of the majestic Cascade Mountains, Mount Bachelor Academy offers a 14-16 month therapeutic boarding school program. The curriculum is designed for adolescents 13-18 who may have behavioral, emotional, motivational problems or learning disabilities. MBA has been providing a well-rounded curriculum integrating therapeutic counseling with intellectual, social and physical growth in a boarding school environment since 1988.

**New Leaf Academy** New Leaf is a therapeutic boarding school that offers a safe, nurturing environment for struggling middle school age girls. At the time of admission, our students are over 10 and under 14 years of age. Our 18-21 month program teaches positive self-expression, responsibility and helps troubled young girls and their families transition to a better place.

**NorthStar Center** North Star Center is a young-adult transitional-living program specializing in assisting struggling students with high school completion, college-prep and college-level courses. Located in the small college and resort community of Bend, Oregon, all students receive personal academic assistance, individual and group counseling, character building wilderness experience and ongoing support in becoming a responsible young adult. Achieving progressive independence to self-reliance is a major focus for all students. The program length is one year.

**Canyonville Christian Academy** Canyonville Christian Academy, a fully accredited boarding high school, has won national and state academic awards and aims to encourage all students to achieve their full potential. CCA offers a distinctly Christian education in a standard classroom setting. The curriculum includes all state-required courses for graduation and a Bible course each term. In addition, for the college-bound student and those with special interests, CCA offers math through calculus, science through physics, foreign language, computer education, music and other electives.

**Cascade Boys Ranch** Cascade Boys Ranch is a rural complex for boys ages 10 to 16, located in the foothills of the Southern Oregon Cascades. Boys live in disciplined boundaries with a family and staff, pursue their academic needs, and have a chance to become well directed and productive citizens. Cascade Boys Ranch endeavors to redirect boys behaviorally by offering parameters in which to learn Accountability, Responsibility, and Trust. Through instruction, steady work, correction, and encouragement, boys develop a healthy self-image and a firm foundation on which to build good lives.

**Milo Adventist Academy** Milo Adventist Academy is a school family committed to creating opportunities for developing a Christlike character, pursuing educational excellence, and discovering the joy of service in a safe, nurturing, and friendly environment.

**Oregon Episcopal School** The purpose of Oregon Episcopal School is to prepare students with promise for higher education and lifelong learning and to enhance their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and artistic growth so that they may realize their power for good as citizens of local and world communities.

**The Delphian School** The Delphian School's mission is "To give young people a rich academic background, a strong sense of ethics and a broad range of abilities to successfully launch them into higher education, a career and life itself. More broadly, help build a better world through effective education."

**Western Mennonite School** Western Mennonite School is dedicated to quality education and the spiritual nurture of our students. Excellent teachers and staff give of themselves to help students realize their potential...spiritually, academically and socially.  
Boarding Schools in Pennsylvania--

**Carson Long Military Institute** Carson Long Military Institute in New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania, offers a way of life that challenges 6th through 12th grade boys to be their

best, emphasizing our conviction that individuals with trained minds and sound bodies are the most likely to succeed in life.

**George School** The George School community, committed to Quaker ideals, cultivates respect for differences by affirming the Light of God in everyone. We teach our students to aspire to excellence as we prepare them for further education and a lifetime of learning as members of the global community. George School is a Friends (Quaker) college preparatory boarding and day school for boys and girls in grades 9 through 12.

**Linden Hall** Linden Hall is an independent, college preparatory, boarding and day school for girls in grades 6-12. The school has been continuously educating young girls for over 258 years. Their motto clearly states: We are learning not only for school but for life. The school compliments its strong academic curriculum with an array of performing and fine arts classes and fitness for life programs, plus a competitive equestrian program.

**Perkiomen School** Perkiomen School has a philosophy focused on creating an effective environment for individual growth and for the development of personal ethics. Perkiomen strives to embrace diversity and help students focus on ideals which are purposeful, reasonable, consistent with traditional values, and spiritually balanced.

**Perkiomen Valley Academy** Perkiomen Valley Academy recognizes that one of the most important things that we can teach our youth is to value their education. PVA combines individualized education with a thoughtfully planned, community-based day treatment program. As in any school, PVA helps students master structured courses they need to live successfully: science, math, English, social studies and computer literacy, to name a few. But PVA also helps them to learn about life: to recognize the need for personal change and growth, to act responsibly and to assume responsibility for their own actions.

**Pine Forge Academy** Pine Forge Academy, a co-educational Seventh-day Adventist school, serves grades 9 - 12. It is committed to provide a Christ centered curriculum in a safe, caring environment, to prepare students spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially for service to God and man.

**The Grier School** Founded in 1853, The Grier School has continuously operated with the mission of helping young women develop their intellectual, athletic and artistic talents. The school motto, "Sana Mens In Corpore Sano," (Sound Mind in a Sound Body) captures the spirit of the school. A sesquicentennial celebration in June of 2003 celebrated the school's 150 years of history.

**The Kiski School** Located on an expansive, yet intimate campus in Saltsburg, Pennsylvania, The Kiski School stands as a unique institution – a residential college preparatory school that excels in educating boys. Kiski accomplishes this in a number of ways: they challenge boys, but also offer them support; they respect tradition while embracing technology; they foster community and encourage self-development.

**The Phelps School** The Phelps School provides a challenging yet supportive day and boarding program for boys. The structured, disciplined environment offers small classes and individualized attention designed to generate academic success and improve self-esteem.

**The School at Church Farm** The mission of The School at Church Farm is to provide a rigorous, well-rounded, college-preparatory education in a caring, Christian environment

to help prepare our students for productive and fulfilling lives. We seek young men of ability and promise for whom the CFS educational experience presents an extraordinary opportunity.

**Valley Forge Military Academy & College** A Valley Forge education is rooted in quality academic programs and supported by leadership responsibilities, character development, personal motivation, and strong athletic and extracurricular opportunities. Valley Forge provides cadets with a complete education that prepares every part of them for success.

**Westtown School** Westtown School is a Quaker, co-educational, day and boarding school founded in 1799. Guided by the Quaker belief that there is that of God in all persons, Westtown School is a community of learners who value—and are themselves strengthened by—the rich diversity of its members.

**Wyoming Seminary** With its distinguished brick and ivy-covered buildings, extensive academic offerings, dedicated faculty, 8:1 student/teacher ratio, invigorating athletic, fine arts and performing arts programs, up-to-date technology, and consistently high placement rate in the nation's top colleges and universities, Wyoming Seminary is known as a challenging, engaging school.

Boarding Schools in Rhode Island--

**Portsmouth Abbey** The Portsmouth Abbey education is grounded in the Western intellectual tradition, from ancient Greece and Rome and continuing into this century. This classical curriculum is balanced by a focus on spirituality, athletics, the arts and fun. The school's mission encompasses the importance of reverence for God and the human person, respect for learning and order, and responsibility for the shared experience of community life.

**St. Andrew's School** St. Andrew's is a coeducational day and boarding school of 200 students in grades 6 through 12. Their beautiful 85-acre campus is located in Barrington, RI, a suburban community within minutes of Providence and easy driving distance to Newport, Boston, and New York. At St. Andrew's, students and families feel a sense of community and each student's learning strengths are valued and nurtured.

**St. George's School** St. George's School is a selective and rigorous co-educational boarding school for students in grades 9-12. Students challenge themselves through a program that combines demanding academics with a rich array of athletic and extracurricular opportunities.

Boarding Schools in South Carolina--

**Ben Lippen School** The purpose of Ben Lippen School is to glorify God by assisting the family and church in equipping students spiritually, academically and socially under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Ben Lippen School has three primary objectives: 1)To call students to Christian discipleship; 2)To provide an excellent academic education; 3)To be an extension of the Christian home.

**Camden Military Academy** The core of the Camden experience is the Academy's academic program. Camden enrolls young men in grades 7 through 12 as well as for a post graduate year. The academic program on the high school level is strictly college preparatory.

Boarding Schools in South Dakota--



**Sunshine Bible Academy** Sunshine Bible Academy is a non-denominational Christian school located in the heart of South Dakota that exists to assist parents with their responsibility to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Boarding Schools in Tennessee--

**Baylor School** Baylor School, founded in 1893, is a coeducational day and boarding college preparatory school enrolling students in grades 6-12. Our students come from around the country and world drawn by a strong academic program, diverse extracurricular activities, and a nurturing residential atmosphere.

**McCallie School** The McCallie School is a college preparatory school for boys that accepts young men with above average to exceptional academic abilities and those students matriculate at some of the best colleges and universities in the nation. The school has been recognized for its innovative educational programs and its overall standards of excellence.

**St. Andrew's-Sewanee** St. Andrew's-Sewanee, one of the oldest Episcopal boarding schools in the country, has a rich 130-year history of college-prep education atop the Cumberland Plateau, about 100 miles from Nashville.

**The King's Academy** The King's Academy is dedicated to preparing students for a life of maximum contribution to the cause of Christ. This preparation focuses on the mental, physical, spiritual, and social development of each student. The academy provides an educational atmosphere in which Christian beliefs and values are freely examined and expressed.

**Webb School** Webb has produced 10 Rhodes Scholars and its graduates have gone on to attend prestigious colleges and universities across the nation and to lead important, successful and fulfilling lives in business, education, and the arts.

Boarding Schools in Texas--

**Brook Hill School** The Brook Hill School is a coeducational private school teaching in the classic tradition from a Christian world view. The Brook Hill School provides excellence in college preparatory education, affirms the gifts and challenges the potential of each student, and encourages students to honor God through Christ-like character.

**Fulshear Ranch** At Fulshear Ranch, young women (age 18 and over) are invited on a journey of self discovery and education. Using a holistic model, participants experience both field-based experiential education and classroom academics, therapeutic groups and activities, life skills and career training, all in an environment which promotes overall health and wellness.

**Incarnate Word High School** Incarnate Word High School promotes a profound respect for persons of all creeds, cultures, and races. A young woman leaves Incarnate Word High School with an inquiring mind, a confident assessment of her own self-worth, and with the empowerment to make a difference in the Church and in her community.

**Marine Military Academy** The Marine Military Academy is unique among all military secondary institutions. In a world where many prefer to take shortcuts and offer less than their personal best effort, the Marine Military Academy challenges each Cadet to strive for excellence and his highest potential.

**San Antonio Academy of Texas** San Antonio Academy of Texas offers prekindergarten through eighth grade boys an exceptional academic program that features small classes, a family-like atmosphere, the development of a positive self-image and a foundation for life based upon the love of God and country, integrity and respect for each other.

**San Marcos Baptist Academy** The mission of San Marcos Baptist Academy is to educate young men and women within a nurturing community based upon Christian values.

**St. Anthony Catholic High School** St. Anthony Catholic High School offers a wide variety of academic, athletic, and other life experiences, guiding students to critically assess their own values and those of society. The school challenges the students to participate in a total program integrating academics, athletics, Christian service, community activities, and spirituality.

**St. Stephen's Episcopal School** St. Stephen's Episcopal School, a coeducational boarding-and-day school of the Diocese of Texas, is a caring, diverse, Christian community that nurtures moral growth and values the potential and dignity of every human being. We challenge motivated students to live intelligently, creatively, and humanely as contributing members of society.

**Texas Military Institute** Texas Military Institute's vision is unique, bold, and timely. The mission of TMI is to provide an excellent educational community, with values based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, challenging motivated students to develop their full potential in service and leadership.

**The Hockaday School** Within the context of an outstanding academic environment, The Hockaday School's goals are to foster a community of concern and friendship, to instill in every girl a love of learning and an understanding of herself and the ethical principles which guide her life, and to develop an appreciation of excellence in all its forms with a commitment to what is right and good.

**Valley Grande Academy** Valley Grande Academy is a coeducational boarding high school owned and operated by the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Valley Grande Academy seeks to provide a high quality college preparatory Christian education for grades 9-12. Most of all the school seeks to help students experience Jesus Christ as a personal friend as they become part of a caring school family.  
Boarding Schools in Utah--

**Aspen Ranch** A licensed residential treatment center located in Loa, Utah the Aspen Ranch utilizes its nationally renown equine therapy program as one of its tools to help young people. The Ranch combines an academic structure with intensive therapeutic milieu to create positive change emotionally, as well as academically. The strong work ethic inherent on the Ranch is fundamental to adolescents 13-17 cultivating the characteristics of responsibility, discipline, respect and teamwork. Length of stay ranges from six to twelve months. NPS-certified in the state of California.

**Island View School** Island View operates its own on-campus private school, since resident's education and pursuit of a high school diploma are an important part of the interdisciplinary treatment. The school is fully accredited and certified teachers show the ability to "re-ignite" residents to the experience of learning. A small class ratio of one teacher to sixteen students per classroom enhances the learning atmosphere. Operating on a year-round basis, Island View provides a full six-period school day, five days per

week. Students are required to complete daily homework assignments and benefit from individualized attention when required.

**Oakley School** The Oakley School was founded in response to the distinct need to create a boarding school that provides a whole education - one that challenges the student's mind, spirit and body. Here students learn to combine reason with emotion and freedom with responsibility. Oakley students have the opportunity to delve into a variety of learning experiences that help them to discover who they are, what they stand for and who they could be. The school maintains high academic standards in a context that nurtures thoughtfulness, emotional vitality, social responsibility, and physical health.

**SunHawk Academy** SunHawk Academy's long-term residential program combines an intense clinical intervention with an accredited academic program. SunHawk treats struggling teens 13-17 with behavioral and substance abuse problems. During our program, students progress through levels as they achieve specific academic and behavioral goals. Personal growth of students is encouraged through extensive therapeutic activities, which are under the direction of qualified clinical staff. The "Life Skills Training" component of the program gives each child extensive exposure to real life experiences that are necessary to succeed in today's society.

**Turn-About Ranch** Turn-About Ranch is a short-term, high-impact therapy program that emphasizes family values and relationships. This co-ed program is located on a cattle ranch in Escalante, Utah and accepts students between the ages of 12 to 18. Licensed as a residential treatment center, Turn-About Ranch has 30 students on campus and offers education and treatment with a Christian-based philosophy.

**Youth Care Inc.** A residential treatment center located in a suburb of Salt Lake City, Utah, Youth Care Inc. is a companion program to Pine Ridge Academy. Youth Care Inc provides individualized care in a family oriented environment. Enrollment is limited to 14 students between the ages of 11-18. Youth Care Inc. provides a therapeutic environment for both mental health and chemical dependency diagnosis. Accreditation is by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations making Youth Care Inc. a preferred provider for many insurance companies.

**Lotts' Legacy Boarding School** Lott's Legacy cares deeply about your teen's future and especially about their "today's"! They know they can be happy; that they can succeed; that they can set and reach goals; that they can become more understanding, accepting young adults and return to their families with a new, positive outlook on life. Make a positive choice for your struggling teens future today.

**Silverado Boys Ranch** Typical boarding schools for troubled youth offer programs in urban settings, while Silverado Boys Ranch provides a challenging and rigorous academic rural setting on 200 acres.

**Wasatch Academy** The Wasatch Academy mission statement is to provide a nurturing community that empowers young men and young women to develop academically, socially and morally, preparing them for college and for the challenges of living in the 21st century.

Boarding Schools in Vermont--

**Bromley Brook** Bromley Brook boarding school for girls educates young women to be tomorrow's leaders. Our mission is to teach each girl to recognize her own individual

needs and to use her self-awareness to achieve more than she thought possible. At Bromley Brook, our faculty is hand-selected for their professional expertise and their boundless enthusiasm for working with girls. Beginning with the admissions process, this faculty collaborates with the student, her family, and referring professionals to create an Assessment-Based Individualized Learning Plan. What makes Bromley Brook School different from other girls' boarding schools? Our emphasis on assessment. Our comprehensive, research-based assessment allows us to create a truly individualized approach to your daughter's education and personal growth.

**St. Johnsbury Academy** The mission of St. Johnsbury Academy, is to provide a diverse, comprehensive, and independent educational community grounded by our traditions, our deep optimism regarding young people, and our commitment to academic excellence.

**Stratton Mountain School** Stratton Mountain School, the first ski academy accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, has a strong tradition of solid college preparatory academics combined with the most comprehensive and innovative training programs available to young alpine and nordic ski racers and snowboarders.

**The Greenwood School** The Greenwood School, founded in 1978, is a pre-preparatory boarding school for boys ages nine to fifteen have been diagnosed with: dyslexia; specific language-based learning disabilities / learning differences (LD); receptive language and/or expressive language deficits; executive functioning deficits; attentional difficulties (ADD or ADHD); disorders of written expression; dysgraphia; or speech and language needs. In fact, a combination of these learning disabilities / learning differences (LD) are often clustered together in most Greenwood students' learning profiles. Despite their learning challenges, their students are highly intelligent and have significant talents in the arts, in woodworking, or in athletics.

Boarding Schools in Virginia--

**Chatham Hall** An all girls boarding school, Chatham Hall offers students a strong, college-preparatory academic program, rich extracurricular opportunities, and a beautiful 362-acre campus. In small classes, teachers challenge students to excel academically.

**Christchurch School** Christchurch began and continues as one of the Episcopal Church Schools in the Diocese of Virginia. They welcome students of all faiths to this community, founded on traditional ideas of education as a lifelong pursuit, service to others, truth, self-discipline, and honor.

**Episcopal High School** Episcopal High School is dedicated to the student's pursuit of excellence and to the joy of learning and self-discovery in a caring and supportive community. Enriched by the educational and cultural resources of the nation's capital, Episcopal's dynamic academic program encourages students to develop individual talents and prepares them to attend selective colleges and universities.

**Fishburne Military School** Fishburne Military School is a private all boys boarding school for grades 8 through 12. Small class sizes and a structured learning environment have proven successful in preparing students for the adult world.

**Fork Union Military Academy** The mission of Fork Union Military Academy is to provide young men a college preparatory education in a residential, Christian environment. Using the best aspects of the military system, the Academy teaches its cadets responsibility, leadership, discipline, and pride by providing an atmosphere in which spiritual, mental,

and physical growth can flourish.

**Foxcroft School** Foxcroft School, founded in 1914, is an independent boarding and day school for girls in grades 9-12 located in Middleburg, Virginia. Foxcroft has become a national model for the education of young women because we have created a learning and living environment that addresses in a comprehensive way the specific strengths and needs of girls. Foxcroft provides a residential learning experience for girls in which academic excellence, leadership, responsibility, and integrity are our highest values.

**Hargrave Military Academy** Located in Southwest Virginia, Hargrave Military Academy is a private boarding school with Christian values serving boys from grades seven to one postgraduate year. Development of personal responsibility, fitness, academic grades and moral character are important goals for each Cadet. Opportunities for personal achievement lead each Cadet to a more successful, rewarding life.

**Massanutten Military Academy** Massanutten Military Academy's mission is to provide every cadet with an academic, character, leadership and physical education of excellence, which ensures their development and readiness for college, leadership, and citizenship. MMA's mission is established on the founding motto of the Academy, "Non Nobis Solum" ("Not for ourselves alone"), and based on the principles of Courage, Purity, and Industry.

**Oak Hill Academy** Oak Hill Academy is a coeducational, Baptist affiliated, boarding/day high school committed to excellence in education and adolescent development in a non-military setting. The mission of Oak Hill Academy is to provide a safe, secure, nurturing environment for girls and boys needing a change in school, peer, community or family relationships.

**Randolph Macon Academy** The mission of Randolph-Macon Academy is to attract young people of high moral character and intelligence with the capacity and desire to attend a school of higher learning; provide a dedicated and highly qualified faculty and staff and a positive, disciplined and religious environment; and educate and produce outstanding leaders of strong character and solid knowledge, prepared for life-long learning and effective citizenship.

**St. Margaret's School** Educating young women for life is a mission we take seriously at St. Margaret's School. We not only help students develop academic skills; we also teach them how to be ethical, responsible adults who contribute to their communities.

**Stuart Hall** Stuart Hall seeks to educate the whole child - mind, body, heart, and spirit - in a special context: a supportive, family-like, Christian environment that nurtures self-esteem and honor, leadership and industry, compassion and commitment to service, and the recognition and acceptance of individual differences.

**The Madeira School** As an all-girls college preparatory boarding and day school, The Madeira School is dedicated to providing girls with a top-notch education and the skills to lead lives of their own making. At Madeira, you will find an extraordinary faculty that will engage and challenge your mind and care about your personal growth. Their unique Co-Curriculum program will allow you to gain real-life work experience and contribute to the community around you. The diversity of their student body will allow you to explore the cultures of the world and make friendships that will last a lifetime.

**Virginia Episcopal School** Virginia Episcopal School is committed to rigorous academic training and vigorous individual attention in a spiritual and ethical environment. Their campus includes three gymnasiums, classroom buildings, residence halls, an art center, and some of the nation's finest equestrian facilities.

**Woodberry Forest School** As an academic institution, Woodberry ranks among the top independent schools in the country. What sets Woodberry apart is its residential community, a campus intentionally focused on supporting young men in the development of character as well as intellect.  
Boarding Schools in Washington--

**Annie Wright School** Annie Wright enjoys a rich tradition, the loyalty of many alumni/ae and parent families, and a reputation for a challenging academic program that develops leadership, character and a sense of belonging.

**Auburn Adventist Academy** Established in 1919, Auburn Adventist Academy is a private coeducational Christian boarding and day high school operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church located in Auburn, Washington. With a vibrant spiritual atmosphere, superior academics, and a friendly and accepting student body, Auburn is the perfect place to pursue educational excellence.

**Upper Columbia Academy** By the grace of God, Upper Columbia Academy educates students to develop harmoniously the physical, mental and spiritual powers, inspiring a life-changing relationship with God and the highest service for others.  
Boarding Schools in West Virginia--

**Linsly School** Founded in 1814, the Linsly School is a day and boarding school for students in grades 5 through 12. We offer a college preparatory curriculum that combines the traditional values of hard work, respect, honor, honesty, and self-discipline within a challenging academic program designed to unlock the potential of each student.

**Mount de Chantal Visitation Academy** The educational philosophy of the Mount is rooted in the spirit of the Visitation Order and the teachings of its founders, St. Francis de Sales and Sister Jane de Chantal. Essential to this heritage is a sensitive and supportive concern for each student. The spirituality of St. Francis de Sales calls us, as educators, to respect our students and to recognize and value their uniqueness.  
Boarding Schools in Wisconsin--

**Conserve School** At Conserve School we believe that our future is intimately related to the future of the natural world. Fundamental to our quest are the natural resources that sustain our lives and the qualities of character that sustain our minds and spirits. We call these qualities our values, and we identify them as follows: compassion, honesty, justice, respect, and responsibility.

**Saint Lawrence Seminary** Saint Lawrence Seminary is a Catholic college preparatory boarding high school, owned and operated by the Capuchin-Franciscan friars. St. Lawrence is a place in which students live, learn, work, and pray together.

**St. John's Northwestern Military Academy** St. John's Northwestern Military Academy believes in the development of the mind, body, and spirit of each individual. The Academy is founded on time-honored values and traditions such as honesty, integrity, duty, honor, and country. Our mission is to build character and scholarship by stressing

the four cornerstones of the cadet lifestyle: Academics, Athletics, Leadership, and Values.

**Wayland Academy** Wayland Academy, established in the heartland of Wisconsin in 1855, is an independent, coeducational, college preparatory, boarding and day school. Wayland's mission: To prepare young people for a successful college experience and a rapidly changing world by opening their minds to the pursuit of knowledge and their hearts to the development of strong character.

Boarding Schools in Wyoming--

**Mount Carmel Youth Ranch** Mount Carmel Youth Ranch, founded in 1992 and located on a 40,000 acre working cattle ranch in northwest Wyoming, is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping at-risk young men.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:45AM (-08:00)

## My husband has been able to access my son's MSN...

Thursday, December 25, 2008

Merry Christmas Mark,

We have been working your program and things are coming along nicely. I would really appreciate your opinion about something though. My husband has been able to access my son's MSN and he is able to see all conversations my son has online with his friends. This came in handy at one point because we were able to find out that A\_\_ was selling/trading his ritalin for cigarettes and alcohol.....this was quite serious so I was happy at that time to be able to track what he was doing. A\_\_ has no idea we can see his MSN on the computer. Anyway, I'm not so sure that my husband should keep checking his conversations online because how will he ever be able to trust him with all this inside information. Let's face it kids bullshit to their friends and exaggerate, so he may not even be being truthful about some things. I was raised pulling the wool over my parents eyes at times and we still had a wonderful loving relationship as does my husband with his parents. Please give me your thoughts on this.

Thank you, J.

.....

Hi J.,

Please refer to "It's O.K. To Spy On Your Teens".

Good Luck,

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:04AM (-08:00)

## Stepfather Fondled Stepdaughter?

Saturday, December 27, 2008

Hi Mark,

I just joined your program, but I am wondering if this is right. My daughter is now 20 years old; she does not live at home anymore. She is at college and living with her boyfriend. The reason I felt that I should join is that so many of the things you have written and said sound so much like her behavior as she was growing up and I just always attributed it to being from a divorced family and living in a "step" family. But just very recently after 15 years in the house with my husband, she comes to me and tells me that he had been fondling her from the time she was 12 to 18. Several questions arose from me by this allegation. My head tells me I should believe my daughter but I am finding it so hard to believe that my husband would be capable of this. I have spoke to a few of the people she has "told" that he has done this to her, but so far these people are saying she NEVER said anything specific just that you have to watch him. Then I heard she threw his son into the mix. His son is 3 years older than her and they have ALWAYS been very close, she has always confided in him, he has always helped her, etc. So without getting so deep into this whole thing through an email I'm just wondering if this is going to help me find out if my daughter DOES have a problem. In the 6 years this was going on she NEVER told me, her biological father (who she did/does see), we have 2 friends that are police (one local one state), she never took this information to them, 2 of the people she said she told were adults and NEVER told me that she told them this. There are just several things that are concerning to me. This is my husband's life on the line, but on the other hand if he did this to my child, HOW HORRIBLE!!!! I have asked my husband to move out to give me the space I feel I need to sort all of this out and he did, his family is very upset by it, but that can ONLY be natural. He has also agreed to go to a counselor as well as take a polygraph to prove his innocence. I have asked my daughter to go to counseling because if he HAS done this to her, she needs help to deal with it. Any advise, any help, any suggestions? Will this program help and lead me in the right direction?

.....

Hi R.,

Whether or not it is occurring more often or being reported more often, the incidence of reported sexual abuse of children has increased in America. Studies have shown 1 out of 4 women - and 1 out of 10 men - state they were sexually abused as children.

A member of their own family or someone known to the family has molested most sexually abused children. Only 15 to 20 percent of child molesters are unknown to their victims.

Force is not commonly used in child molestation. Since the offender is often a close family member, the victim usually has a trusting relationship with him. The fact that trust



is deliberately violated by the offender is what makes child sexual abuse so damaging.

Any sexualized behavior (e.g., sexual acting out, talking about sex at a young age) is a sign that the child or adolescent may be abused.

Most victims - over 90 percent according to research - are telling the truth when they reveal what has been happening to them. Usually the victim has no reason to lie about so serious a matter while the alleged offender has every reason to deny it. Since there is so much embarrassment and shame associated with it, young ladies (and men) tend not to mention past sexual abuse if it had not happened?

Because of the realistic fears of disclosure - the shame, criminal prosecution and possible break-up of the family - sexual abuse can go on for years before it is discovered. The pressures on the victim not to disclose are enormous. Often, she has been repeatedly warned by the offender not to tell and she is afraid of what might happen to him - and her family if she does.

If the disclosure of the sexual abuse is handled calmly and properly and if treatment is provided, the abuse will not necessarily permanently traumatize a victim. But without proper handling and treatment, the effects to the victim can include life-long depression, guilt, self-concept problems, unresolved anger, sexual dysfunctions or hyper-sexuality and difficulty trusting other people.

Whenever a youth says she has been sexually victimized, the best strategy is to believe her. She must also be reassured that she has done the right thing by disclosing and that she is in no way responsible for the abuse. Her chances of recovering from the molestation are much greater if she is supported in these ways.

If you suspect that sexual abuse has occurred, you must report it.

Polygraphs are much more reliable today than in times past. Thus, if he passes, you will need to consider putting the whole thing in the past. If he does not pass, then ...well, you know the truth about what went on.

Re: Will this program help and lead me in the right direction?

I think it will help you make sense of some of your daughter's "dysfunctional" behavior – behavior that would be much more related to an "over-indulgent" parenting style rather than the after-effects of divorce or molestation.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:22AM (-08:00)

## She screams that she wants to kill me...

Monday, December 29, 2008

Hi Mark,

Could you please advise how you would deal with the following situation.

When I tell my daughter that she cannot go to a friends for a sleepover (after already staying at friends a previous night) she screams that she wants to kill me and that she cannot stand being in the house with me and then storms out and states that she is going anyway. She has fallen out with her boyfriend and has self-harmed. Her boyfriend is finished with her because of her tantrums and consequential self-harm.

She is verbally attacking me from the moment she gets up and will not listen to a word I say. My partner has moved out because of the way she treats me and my doctor wants to put me on antidepressants.

I am a single parent with a 13-year-old boy and my 16-year-old daughter.

I am at the end of my tether.

Appreciate your help.

Thanks

M.

.....

Hi M.,

Re: "...she is going anyway."

Teens use threats of running away as a means of getting attention, resolving an argument or even as an attempt to make their parents feel guilty or scared. Yet, too often parents take light of what their teen states regarding running away. If your daughter is threatening to run away, take time to consider what the underlying problem might be. If she threatens to run away, don't be intimidated. Let her know that you'll call the police and speak to each and every one of her friends' parents in order to find her. Let her know that you will do whatever you have to do to get her back – no matter where she goes – even if it means filing a runaway complaint with authorities.

Re: self-harm.

Please refer to this page: <http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/cutting.html>

Re: verbal attacks.

Are you using "Anger Management" and "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [Session #3 – online version of the eBook] to deal with this issue?

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:02AM (-08:00)

## I almost had to keep from chuckling...

Tuesday, December 30, 2008



Mark-

I have tried some of the reverse psychological responses on my 2 girls -- and you should have seen the confusion on their faces! I almost had to keep from chuckling.

D.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:59AM (-08:00)

## Teen Abuses Cell Phone Privileges

Thursday, January 01, 2009

Hi J.,

**==> I've responded throughout your email below:**

Dear Mark,

Sorry about my questions about chores. I jumped the gun after watching your video and assumed that was the same as covered in the written materials without reading through it.

I had a peaceful Christmas without problems with my son over the present concern I had.

**==> Wonderful.**

My son had shoveled the snow to have earned a wireless keyboard with a mouse for only \$39. He seemed to be okay with it. He worked, earned it and I spent less money because it was boxing day price. Wow, what a difference. I praised him after each shoveling. At the last shoveling after we placed the order online, he still went out to shovel the snow and even told me that he did it the way I wanted him to do.

Further, I only got him necessity for the Christmas present which was offering him to shop for some clothes. And I even attached a condition to it and that was he needed to take off the remaining foul language in his room before we went shopping. He wasn't happy at all, but did not make a fight about it. He had tears in his eyes, said that wasn't what he wanted for presents and went into his room for a few hours on the Christmas day. He came out in the afternoon and joined the Turkey dinner with my friend's families over. He was polite to everyone. I then discovered that he erased all of the foul language! Wow!! I had tried everything to get him to remove it and even told him to find his own place to live, but nothing had made him do that.

**==> These are good improvements!**

With all the good stuff going on, unfortunately I am in a challenge right now!!

My son refused the 1-day consequence over leaving his cell phone with me for one day. Now I am issuing the 3-day discipline by taking the internet and his cell phone away. The crime is that my son ignores my request to keep his phone on for me to call him and to answer my calls. I explained to him that I need to be able to get hold of him on his cell phone when I needed to, but he won't listen. I feel this is reasonable parental request, am I correct?

**==> Exactly ...you are right on track here.**

The challenge now is that my son has refused any disciplines in the past. This time he did not leave his phone with me yesterday AND did not come home last night (no show this morning when I left for work). For your info., not coming home on his own will happened in the past. I made the decision this morning to start the 3-day consequence anyway because I didn't know what else to do with the curve ball he threw at me by not coming home. I took the modem and the house phone with me and I am about to call the cell phone company to report the loss of his phone because this is the only way to disconnect it temporarily. I did the research before hand.

Where do I go from here on and what can I expect to happen from him?

**==> First of all, I have to say that you have clearly studied that material. I am really impressed with how you handled this situation.**

**Let him know that the 3-day-discipline starts as soon as he returns home. Also, if you can contact him, tell him that -- if he does not return home immediately -- you will call police and file a "run away" complaint against him.**

Do I tell him to come home by the curfew for 3 days in a row in order to get off the 3-day discipline?

**==> No. He should be grounded (in the house) for those 3 days.**

What else can I offer him to get off? It must have other options because curfew has been problem for long time.

I predict he won't comply by 3 days. So, do I tell him until he does the whatever option, he then can get off it?

**==> You may need to involve the police and get assistance from your local juvenile probation department. If he is not going to follow house rules AND refuses to accept discipline, then you have only 2 choices really: (1) you can let him run wild (really bad choice), or (2) you can get assistance from authorities.**

You might feel that I should not pick this fight right now because the Christmas has been fine with him. But I have talked with him heavily about the phone issue last a week or so, and it progresses to this point and I don't know how to delay it without sending him the wrong message that I gave up. I thought I would pick a minor issue to show him that I am able to carry through the consequences the way differently from the past. This is

important for me in terms of tackling harder issue later like the curfew.

Please provide me with your advise on this challenge. Thank you.

==> Again, you are largely on track -- I can't emphasize this enough.

**Be sure to read Ask The Parent Coach on the page entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid"[session #3 - online version of the eBook].The information there applies directly to your current situation.**

**Mark**

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:02AM (-08:00)

## When Teens Steal From Parents

Thursday, January 01, 2009

What do I do with my 16-year-old son who continues to steal things from our home. He has stolen jewelry and pawned it. Of course he always denies that he did it, but I have found pieces of my jewelry hidden in his room. He has been caught stealing from cars. I told him we were going to start over this year and no longer bring up what he did in the past, thinking he has changed, but now there is one hundred dollars missing from my daughter which was a Christmas gift. Of course he denies taking it, but refused to show me his wallet. Any suggestions of how to deal with this and get past the fact I don't believe anything my son says?

.....

Hi M.,

Give him a warning that - the next time something comes up missing - the police will be called and you will file theft charges (this assumes that you will have some evidence that it was, in fact, your son who took the item in question). If he steals and you refuse to get authorities involved - it shows he can do it with impunity.

I don't know where you are located, but in some states there is something that is called a "youth at risk petition". This is where you ask the court to step in and help you with your out of control teen. He is not arrested, but has accountability with the court. If he messes up then he will go to detention.

Emptying his room of everything but necessities is also an option.

Taking his door off as well is an option. Thus, he has no place to hide the things he steals.

If he gets an allowance take part of it to pay for the stolen items.

It is going to depend on how far you are willing to take it. If you are not willing to take

discipline to the next level you can expect more of the same from him.

Lastly, the real valuable things should probably be kept under lock-and-key from this point on.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:27AM (-08:00)

## When Teens Isolate In Their Bedrooms To Avoid Consequences

Thursday, January 01, 2009

R\_\_ has now isolated herself in her room. She is not contacting friends. She insists that we have ruined / are ruining her life, and she will not talk to us.

.....

Re: R\_\_ has now isolated herself in her room.

A child's bedroom is as much of a privilege as her bicycle. Thus, ground her FROM her room. The grounding can be immediately lifted as soon as she shows evidence that she will work on the behavior contract.

Children always have something that they value -- even if that "something" is to simply do "nothing."

Re: She is not contacting friends. She insists that we have ruined / are ruining her life, and as we said, she will not talk to us.

Allow her to have her mad-time. Pouting takes a lot of energy. She will eventually grow tired of this "game" (and it is a game -- a game called "I'll pout and hide in my room until I get my way").

Remind her that you love her, and that she has your permission to be upset.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:15AM (-08:00)

## Please provide any additional details of the content of your online...

Friday, January 02, 2009

Hello Mark,

searching the internet for resources to assist some of our families with parenting teenagers and came across your web site - can you please provide any additional details of the content of your online parenting program.

Thank you

Kind Regards

Helen Ellery  
Field Officer  
Department for Child Protection  
Roebourne  
Ph: 91821208  
Fax: 91821375

.....  
Hi Helen,

Online Parent Support (OPS) is a program designed specifically for parents of strong-willed or out-of-control adolescent children. OPS provides the practical and emotional support parents need to change destructive adolescent behavior.

The straightforward, step-by-step action plans presented in the curriculum allow parents to take immediate steps toward preventing or intervening in their children's negative choices. Parents involved with OPS have the opportunity to experience success at home within the first week.

The curriculum teaches concrete prevention, identification, and intervention strategies for the most destructive of adolescent behaviors. Parents cycle through programming quickly, thus reducing the length of time that (a) effective solutions in parenting are implemented and (b) resultant positive change in adolescent behavior is experienced.

Myths and Misconceptions about Online Parent Support (OPS)--

It is only for people who do not know anything about parenting.

Being the parent of a teen has never been easy, but now it can seem like the most difficult job anyone could ever have! Times have changed and so have teens. Teens are a lot more complex than in times' past. Ask any parent and they will tell you that they could use a little help in raising their teens to be healthy and responsible adults. All parents can find something of value in OPS. It provides important communication skills and disciplinary techniques to those parents who want to (a) improve relations with their ever-changing teen, (b) decrease parent-child conflict in the home, and (c) assist in greatly reducing their child's emotional and behavioral problems.

It is only for parents who have "bad" kids.

We hear so much about bad kids on TV and the news that sometimes it seems like this whole generation of kids have gone astray. The truth is that the vast majority of today's teens are really good kids. However, even good kids and great parents can run into problems. Perfect children and perfect families only exist in movies and on television.

OPS recognizes this fact and is designed to offer sound, practical help for the majority of parents and the majority of kids. We understand that families who have teens with multiple problems require more help than what they can provide. For that reason, we routinely assist families and teens to find the additional help they need.

It is mainly for parents who have young kids or babies.

If it seems like most of the books and programs on parenting deal with young kids and babies, you are right. One reason is because the early years of a child's life are the most important for establishing a sound foundation. The other reason is because working with (and writing about) young kids and babies is a whole lot easier than doing the same for teens. Think about it. Babies and young kids do not have sex. They do not get pregnant. They do not drive cars. They do not smoke, drink nor do drugs. They do not hang out with gangs. They do not have a tenth of the problems that teens face. Parents of teens need programs too, but not the same kind of programs that are meant for parents of young kids and babies. Finding a program specifically designed for parents of teens is not that easy. This is why we have developed OPS.

It is not in touch with reality.

As much as we would like to return to a better time, we can never turn back the clock. The reality is that times will never be like the 1950's. Unlike the 1950's, where two-parent households were the norm, the majority of households today are headed by a single parent. We recognize that, in the real world, the mother is usually the only parent in the home. Furthermore, we know that single moms have multiple kids to take care of and multiple responsibilities to fulfill.

It won't affirm my cultural values.

Most authors tend to write about the culture they know best. Because it is the predominant culture in this country, most authors of programs and books write about white, middle-class families. As a result, some programs may not be sensitive to the cultural differences of minority populations. In the past ten years, there has been a rapid movement towards making programs more culturally relevant to different populations. We pay attention to how different cultures raise their kids and have adapted OPS to match.

It will treat parents like they were kids in school.

Most programs are educational. Some educational programs have been adapted from school-based programs. Some educational programs are often taught by teachers (who may be more used to working with kids than with adults). These programs could cause parents to feel as if they are back in school, and that may not be a good thing. As you will learn, not all programs are educational programs, and not all programs are like classes in high school. OPS is a support program that includes online counseling. More importantly, though, OPS is designed for parents of all educational levels -- and will never make parents feel like kids.

It will take too much time to complete.

OPS consists of 4 sessions which will take parents approximately 90 minutes each session to complete. That's the good news. The bad news is that you may miss something you need if you decide not take advantage of OPS. The parenting of teens



covers a wide range of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Parenting of teens involves far more than just picking up a few tricks. We want to cover some important communication skills and disciplinary techniques. This will take a few sessions to cover effectively. Some parents, when asked if they have ever been in a family program before, may answer, "Yes I have, and I did not find it helpful." On closer examination, one may find that these parents did not attend their program long enough to get out of it what they needed to know and to practice.

Whoever developed this program probably thinks that spanking is child abuse or tells parents they can't spank their kids.

OPS does not promote the idea that spanking is child abuse. When done in the heat of anger though, spanking often does lead to physical abuse. While spanking may be appropriate for some young kids, most counselors, social workers, and psychologists will tell you that physical punishment is not appropriate for teens. Rather than having it escalate into abuse (or, in some cases, result in retaliation by the teen), we discourage spanking as a method of discipline. Instead, we offer parents several alternatives to spanking. Sometimes, these alternatives are not as quick and easy to apply as a good whipping, but neither will they be potentially damaging to the teen physically, emotionally or psychologically.

It won't work.

The research says otherwise. Not only does OPS work, it often creates dramatic improvements in the lives of families in a few short weeks. Parenting programs have been around for fifty years, and the reason for their longevity is because they do help parents cope with their kids. Parenting is one of the most important roles we can have, yet we have to learn about it on our own without formal training. What we know about parenting comes from the direct experience with our parents as kids. Some of what worked for us when we were kids will also work for our own kids. On the other hand, some of what worked for us will not work for our kids.

OPS will provide you with a range of ideas (both new and old) that have been tested and proven to work with today's teens. Like any new skill, practice makes perfect. We encourage, but cannot control how often a parent will practice putting new skills into use. What you get out of it is what you put into it.

Mark Hutten, M.A.

OPS is the Online Version of the Parent-Teen Support Group  
Madison County Youth Center  
Madison Superior Court, Division 2  
3420 Mounds Road  
Anderson, Indiana 46017-1873  
Probation (765) 646-9213  
Fax (765) 646-9229

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:04AM (-08:00)

# We thought maybe he should see that the grass is not always greener...

Monday, January 05, 2009

Mr Hutten,

I have a question to ask but I feel I should give some background material first.

My girlfriend and I have been living together for 5 years now. She has three sons two still live with us one has moved out on his own. The two living with us are 9 and 15. I have two sons one in college and a 15 year old.

The reason for purchasing your study guide is for her 15 year old. When we moved in together (my home – in case it matters) we had issues with my 15 year (at the time 11), it lasted two weeks and everything collected itself back together. The house went along fine for quite some time. I coached her sons in little league, and tried to be the best I could for them. My son is more a computer nerd so it was nice to have kids interested in sports.

Her kid's father was never much in their lives with visits to him two to three times a year tops, and always with an issue when they would go there. Her ex is an alcoholic, and on occasion the 15 year old would catch him drunk, the younger rarely saw it.

Her 15 year old started giving us problems about a year ago. Just your typical testing the waters type of stuff. Staying out at least 15 minutes past when you told him to come home type of stuff. We did what we thought was best in grounding and applying chores. But then came the disrespect and that was the worst he would not grant us any it was like we became non people in his eyes. I was no longer able to talk with him because I started getting the "your not my father" bit. He started disrespecting his mother on almost every situation only being nice when there was something he wanted. I knew the adjustment of coming to live with me would happen but it took almost 3 years to surface, my sons happened in the first two weeks. I guess it really took me off guard when his grades dropped and I wouldn't let him go out for spring training in football because of 2 F's and D's on the report card. This to me seemed to be the spiral downward. I talked with the school and wanted him to play but wanted them to help by having his coach talk with him, but that was no use as long as he had a 1.5 GPA he could play. And making A's in P.E. and another elective he had that. But our rules differed from theirs, so we became the Bad People.

After starting your course we saw we made mistakes and were doing our best to stay on the rules you set forth. It has been a gradual thing but improvement has been seen, although not in grades but we saw hope their also. Being 15 has it motivations with driving permit and all being able to be used as a tool. Which we have told both of the 15 year olds driving is a privilege that comes with good grades and work. No work, no driving, case closed.

Well now to my question. Her sons went to their fathers after Christmas this year. When their mother went to pick them up the 15 year old said he wanted to stay and live there. We had discussed this throughout the past year or so what to do when this came up, and we thought maybe he should see that the grass is not always greener on the other side,

and that rules will follow wherever he goes, and that three visit a year father will be seen as parent also (hopefully). It seemed so easy in a hypothetical situation, but now it consumes every waking thought. Did we do the right thing? What to say when he calls? What if he says he wants to come home, although I want him to I don't want to screw up a great chance at getting on the right path by saying something stupid or sounding to proud that he just wants to come home? It hasn't even been 24 hours yet and I am getting the acid stomach, I can't even imagine what his mother feels. We think we did what is best for the long term but it sure seems wrong right now.

Any thoughts or direction would be greatly appreciated.

Thank You,

D.

.....

Hi D.,

Re: Did we do the right thing?

I believe so.

Re: What to say when he calls?

That you love and miss him.

Re: What if he says he wants to come home, although I want him to I don't want to screw up a great chance at getting on the right path by saying something stupid or sounding to proud that he just wants to come home?

You have strategies to deal with him effectively now. If he wants to come home, then you will have a golden opportunity for a fresh start. Draft a behavior contract first - and let him see it and sign-off on it. In this way, he will know up front what the expectations are.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:18AM (-08:00)

## Lying & Disrespect

Tuesday, January 06, 2009

Hi M.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

Thanks for your response. I guess part of the problem is that there are so many issues and I am not sure which is most pressing. Long term, the biggest problems seem to be lying and disrespect. They are the most difficult for me to deal with.

== >Please click here for info on lying: <http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/lying.html>

==> Re: disrespect. Refer to the strategy entitled “When You Want Something From Your Kid” [session #3 – online version].

When she lies, I do not always catch her. I suspect lying a lot, but even when I catch her red handed, she will manipulate and continue lying until the story is so long, I forget what we even started with. So many other times, I do not know if she is lying or not and if I can't verify, I don't feel justified in disciplining. She also lies to other people. If I hear a lie third hand and address it with her, she says it is not true. Therefore, I rarely end up disciplining what I imagine is a ton of lies that I do not catch for sure.

Disrespect is also hard because it takes on so many minor forms, like eye rolling, ignoring, etc., but also is bigger in the manipulation and lying and complete lack of respect for other peoples feelings and things. I am not sure which battle of these to pick.

In addition, I have hunted and hunted for therapists that would work on social skills with her to no avail. She sees a therapist weekly, but will not open up to any of them (we are on the 4th one). I tend to feel sorry for her because she is constantly losing a friend, fighting with someone, etc. She really does not have any peer support and has gotten so desperate that she will do anything to impress or get any type of attention from her peers. Most of her behavior issues, seem to stem from her trying to impress her peers.

==> Therapy is largely a waste of time and money. It is just another “traditional” parenting strategy that often makes a bad problem worse – because “counseling” or “therapy” feels like punishment to the child.

==> If you will read all the text [in both the online and printable versions of the eBook] as well as view all the instructional videos, you WILL be pleasantly surprised at how much positive change occurs in a fairly short time.

==> Stay the course – and stay in touch,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:08AM (-08:00)

## Eloquent Lines of Bullshit

Tuesday, January 06, 2009

Hi J.,

== > I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi Mark,

I have 3 questions now with one being the most pressing. That is, do you see my son is going to accept the discipline based on the information I provided?

== > Strong-willed, out-of-control children will rehabilitate themselves when they are

ready, and not a minute sooner. They will change their behavior when – and only when – they choose to. The job of parents is not to get children to obey. It is to simply teach them that responsible behavior results in one sort of consequence while irresponsible behavior results in quite another. Oppositional, defiant kids refuse to accept this fundamental reality until they are forced to experience a significant degree of discomfort related to their poor choices. Discomfort comes from parents' implementation of tough love – and unfortunately, tough love is often tougher on the parent than the child, especially if the parent has adopted an over-indulgent parenting style over the years.

Last night he acted out badly insulting, harassing, shouting at me for a half hour to force me to give him the internet to print math materials or he would not go to school today. I did not accept his reason. I re-stated my 3-day grounding discipline to him.

Please just allow me to show you what we communicated and see how you think of our situation is --very bad, have hope and out of tunnel soon?  
In the evening he wrote:

"First things first, you have the phone cord. I plugged in a clock phone with that wire Friday night so wherever you put the phone is where the cord is.

Secondly, it's funny how you're still trying to ground me and powertrip by removing all means of contact from the house. That surely is the way to rekindle a relationship during the final stretch I'm here. Plus, do you really expect me to go along with it? I'm an adult, I think for myself so you're going nowhere besides backwards. Did you ever even consider how I'll do my math + english without daily internet access? Guess not. Keep trying to impose rules on me, before you know it I'm gone and regret will be on both sides. And it's not like they've worked on me, even if I don't contact my friends I'd rather walk the streets than be here."

I wrote back:

"You convinced me very clearly. I found the cord. It was my mistake and I apologize. It is your choice to walk the streets because I can not tie you down at home. But I want to tell you that nobody would love you more than I do in the world. So, I hope that you choose to make better choices.

You will have the phones and internet back as long as you choose to accept the 3-day discipline and stay in the house the entire time. Let's say it starts 7 pm this evening. You will be ungrounded at 7 pm Wednesday if you come home straight from the school and stay in the house.

Also, next time you choose to violate the cell phone use and prevent me from reaching you, you will choose a 7-day grounding with phones and internet revoked.

You are legally an adult now, so I expect more that you choose to accept responsibilities for your choices. The house rules do not disappear, and there are more rules on your way in your life ahead such as rules from a landlord, roommates and employers. You will choose to improve and do better with your life if you choose to take responsibilities for rules."

== > Great Job! I couldn't have said it better.

He then acted out badly. He went out 9:30 to get his math printed and said it was my fault

that he had to break the grounding. On the way out he said something like: I can see that you are a little apprehensive. Don't worry, I am harmless, I won't harm you, you are my mother. Did he really mean this or would he do the opposite of this one day? He returned home before 12.

== > Of course he acted badly then. He gave you HIS best power trip (I see he is a very good at feeding you eloquent lines of bullshit), but you didn't cave. GOOD FOR YOU.

== > Keep working the program - I think you are over a very important "hump" now.

Mark

MyOutOfControlTeen.com

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:33AM (-08:00)

## She tells me everything...

Tuesday, January 06, 2009

Hi Mark,

I have run into a situation I don't really know what to do. I have a 13-year-old daughter and for the most your program is working great. My problem is she is almost too honest with me. She tells me everything. Two weeks ago I noticed her mood was horrible, I asked her if she was smoking pot? She got cranky and 20 minutes later she brings a bud of weed out of her room and told me to get rid of it. She told me where she got it and agrees to not go over there anymore, not happy about it, but accepted it. Now I let her go to another friends for a sleepover and they went to another friends house, she was offered ecstasy? She told me she refused it and so did the girl she went over there with, but the one girl did some. Now I said well, I guess you won't be going over there anymore, I explained I am glad she told me and was proud she made a good decision, now she says well, if that is what I get every time I am honest with you, I am not going to tell you what goes on anymore! Help, I don't want her to shut down on me, but I have trusted her to say no to pot before and she did it. Am I doing the right thing? Should I be calling parents even if I really don't know them? Thanks for your program!

A.

.....

Hi A.,

Re: "...if that is what I get every time I am honest with you, I am not going to tell you what goes on anymore!"

We reward "telling the truth" with acknowledgment and praise - not by withholding consequences.

Please click here for more info re: lying.

Re: "Should I be calling parents even if I really don't know them?"

Absolutely. Not to chastise you, but I'm a bit surprised you asked such a question. Do NOT trust anything your daughter tells you until you can verify that it is the truth.

Oh ...by the way. I think you may have fallen for a few lines of bullshit when your daughter "acted as if" she was being totally honest with you re: the pot incident and the sleepover.

Strong-willed, out-of-control teens are experts at tricking their parents, thus you should adopt an "extend-trust-after-verification" approach in the future.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:32AM (-08:00)

## He was very thankful and appreciative to have his privileges back...

Wednesday, January 07, 2009

Hi Mark,

I just thought I'd give you an update. Our son A\_\_ went out New Year's Eve and arrived home on January 3rd, 2009. He did call though, but we told him that he would have to come home or deal with the consequences (he had no medication or clothes). When he returned home (at 7:15am after partying all night wreaking of smoke and booze - and gasping for air because he is asthmatic and smokes and had no ventolin) we took away, the TV, computer, phone and we locked his bedroom door and made him sleep on a roll-away cot. He bitched and complained that we were doing damage to his back....oh, we also told him 3 square meals a day, no snacking, which was torture because he is 6'3 and eats a lot. Anyway, we went the full 3 days and it's over now. He was very thankful and appreciative to have his privileges back....so that's great!!! It was hard, but we did it. To be honest I broke down once, but then got back with the program (I let him eat something between meals, and I had a whole heart to heart with him - which would have gone better if I'd talked to a wall) and my husband got mad once and yelled at him after I allowed him to eat and he left all his dishes all over and made him get off his cot at 1am and do the dishes. So we worked together as a team and put our poker faces back on.

I have told my Aunt about the program and she is going to sign up too.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

I really appreciate the update.

You are clearly NOT employing "half-measures." Great job -- and thanks for working the program as it is intended.

To your continued success,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:02AM (-08:00)

## I realized I had to change my behavior to help him change his...

Wednesday, January 07, 2009

Hello Mark ...thank you for the welcome e-mail, I just read thru the introduction and the first assignment and I'm already feeling empowered... I have been thru psychologists, psychiatrists, therapist, social workers and alternative medicine... and found no solutions, actually I think it has made matters worse, he uses his so called sickness as an excuse for his behavior. I ended up rewarding him for doing what he was supposed to do and not disciplining him for his bad behavior. I can't get him to do anything without offering him a reward. I started taking him to the doctors when he was 5 years old and he is now 15. I'm afraid of what these next 3 years will bring my way. He will not do chores, homework, basically anything that I ask him to do. He constantly shows anger towards me and blames me for everything that goes wrong in his life. He is not accountable for his actions. He is currently failing in school. I have set-up a teachers conference today, asked the counselor to reach out to him and asked about the schools R.O.C. program or classes.

My decision today to look for another answer came because my son decided he was going to teach me a lesson because I refused to buy him yet another pair of expensive Jordan shoes, he made sure he got to school late yesterday and today he refused to go to school. (this is the first time that he has been this defiant) He threw me out of his room with horrible verbal abuse! I made a decision for the new year that I was going to find a solution to this ever mounting problem, but most importantly I wasn't going to let him keep playing my buttons, no more anger, no more fear, no more reactions to his behavior. I realized I had to change my behavior to help him change his and with God's help I found your web site.

Warm regards,

V.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:49AM (-08:00)

## Adolescent Physical abuse Towards Mothers

Thursday, January 08, 2009

The paucity of attention paid to adolescent physical abuse towards mothers is indicated by the sparse literature on the topic. Clearly, there is an urgent need to conduct research into this aspect of family life. A research study will, therefore, be designed to explore the



perspectives of mothers who experience adolescent physical abuse and to determine the direction for developing effective policies and services to address the needs of mothers and young people.

Reviewing the literature--

Physical abuse within the family context is of concern as it exists within all cultures, family backgrounds, and socio-economic situations (Ministry of Social Development, 2002).

The family physical abuse literature to date has primarily focused on intimate partner abuse and child abuse. Although now gaining greater attention, the issue of adolescent physical abuse towards their mothers has been a neglected area (Agnew & Huguley, 1989; Bobic, 2004; Cottrell & Monk, 2004; Eckstein, 2004; Peek, Fischer, & Kidwell, 1985). In New Zealand the available information about adolescent physical abuse towards mothers comes from articles published in the popular press (Aldridge, 1995; Stickley, 1998) and anecdotal evidence from organizations such as Tough Love, the police, and community intervention and prevention services that work with people affected by physical abuse.

The lack of research literature on adolescent physical abuse towards mothers is of concern as noted in recent reports, such as *Te Rito: New Zealand Family Physical Abuse Prevention Strategy* (Ministry of Social Development, 2002), *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key Issues and Future Directions for Family Physical Abuse Work in New Zealand* (Fanslow, 2005) and *An Agenda for Family Physical Abuse Research* (New Zealand Family Physical Abuse Clearinghouse, 2006). No direct research on the topic appears to have been undertaken in New Zealand. More extensive information and additional literature on physical abuse towards mothers, however, is available from overseas sources; some is based on data from surveys conducted in the United States, other information comes from the Canadian National Clearinghouse on Family Physical Abuse (Agnew & Huguley, 1989; Brezina, 1999; Cornell & Gelles, 1982; Cottrell, 2001, 2003; Cottrell & Monk, 2004; Peek et al., 1985; Ulman & Strauss, 2003). Several articles from Australia also address the topic (Bobic, 2002, 2004; Gallagher, 2004a, 2004b).

The prevalence of adolescent physical abuse towards mothers is difficult to establish. Estimates of incidence within the available literature vary from 5-18% of families experiencing this phenomenon. A small number of studies from overseas have examined survey data based on quantitative measures; however, much of this information is ten to thirty years old (Cottrell & Monk, 2004; Eckstein, 2004). The available statistics generally focus on the use of physical abuse by children or adolescents towards their mothers (Agnew & Huguley, 1989; Bobic, 2004; Eckstein, 2004; Peek et al., 1985). The type of physical abuse is usually categorized as "hitting" (Agnew & Huguley, 1989; Peek et al., 1985), although verbal and emotional abuse may also be included (Eckstein, 2004). However, other developmentally relevant behaviors, more commonly found in the youth literature, for example, financial abuse and damage to property, are largely neglected.

Explanations regarding the cause and continuation of adolescent physical abuse towards mothers, as well as information about the most effective ways of assisting mothers, are limited (Bobic, 2004). Cottrell (2001) suggests there is no single and definitive explanation for physical abuse towards mothers. Rather, a range of multifaceted and interconnected dynamics contributes to this behavior. These dynamics may include biological, psychological and social factors, as well as those related to youth culture (Martin, 2002), and risk factors linked with youth offending (McLaren, 2000, 2002). In line

with current information regarding interpersonal physical abuse, both male and female youth participate in all forms of physical abuse towards mothers (Cottrell, 2003), while women are most likely to be at risk of becoming targets of the physical abuse (Agnew & Huguley, 1989).

The link between growing up in the context of family physical abuse and the continuation of violent behavior onto the next generation is becoming increasingly highlighted in current family physical abuse discourse. There is also evidence to suggest that where there is physical abuse between mothers, and/or mothers are violent towards a young person, there is greater risk of the young person becoming violent towards his or her parent (Bobic, 2004; Ulman & Strauss, 2003). Furthermore, adolescents who abuse their mothers often abuse their siblings as well (Harbin & Madden, 1979; Heide as cited in Eckstein, 2004). However, more extensive studies are needed to explore the issue further and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the development of violent behavior in some adolescents.

As with other types of interpersonal physical abuse and abuse, it is likely that adolescent physical abuse towards mothers is more widespread than the available literature and studies suggests. Under reporting is likely to be influenced by the nature of the relationship between the young person and their mothers. Internal factors such as parental shame and fear of blame and external factors such as community judgment of their capacity to parent (Bobic, 2004) may also contribute to mothers denying or minimizing their experiences and maintaining secrecy (Agnew & Huguley, 1989). Cottrell and Monk (2004) suggest that reluctance to disclose is likely to be exacerbated by the limited access to means of intervention. Social service agencies increasingly recognize the prevalence of this type of physical abuse. However, research that could provide practice models of how to respond to this type of physical abuse is also lacking (Cottrell, 2001).

There is also scant information about whether adolescent physical abuse towards mothers relates more to family physical abuse or to youth physical abuse in general. Theoretical approaches to family physical abuse have centered on adult-initiated physical abuse and may be limited in their application to adolescent-initiated physical abuse (Cottrell & Monk, 2004; Peek et al., 1985). Research and theoretical frameworks relating to youth physical abuse may address these limitations. As integrating frameworks may be useful in addressing adolescent physical abuse towards mothers (Bobic, 2004; Cottrell & Monk, 2004), by combining knowledge from the fields of family physical abuse and youth physical abuse we may be able to more effectively expand our understanding of the phenomenon.

Proposed research--

The New Zealand Family Physical Abuse Clearinghouse has identified adolescent physical abuse against mothers as a significant gap in research on all forms of family physical abuse (NZFVCH, 2006). The level of youth physical abuse within our communities is also of concern. Where one issue ends and another begins may not be clear-cut. However, what is clear is the need for New Zealand-based research to explore the phenomenon of adolescent violent behavior within the context of the family. The literature review that is reported upon here provides the basis for the development of a research proposal that will contribute to the filling of this gap.

The proposed study will be designed to explore mothers' experiences of physical abuse

perpetrated by adolescents (aged 14 to 17 years) in their care. Young people aged 14 years and over are held accountable for offending under New Zealand legislation and are at an age at which intervention through statutory agencies may be required. Mothers from varying family configurations will be invited to take part in the research. This will include representation from Pakeha, Maori, Pacific, and Asian populations. Attention to ethnic diversity will be important as a necessary step towards meeting the needs of all families who experience adolescent physical abuse towards mothers. Ethical considerations will also be important, particularly those concerning cultural issues (Anae, Coxon, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2001; Ruwhiu, 2001; Tolich, 2002) and safety issues (Ellsberg, Heise, Pena, Agurto, & Winkvist, 2001).

The research will take a mixed method approach where both quantitative and qualitative data are sought. The option of using this approach in a longitudinal study will also be considered. Data collection will focus on experiences of all types of physical abuse, including physical abuse, psychological, emotional and financial abuse, and damage to property and material goods.

Adolescent physical abuse towards mothers is a complex area. There is little evidence-based information that can assist families or research that can support practitioners working with families who are experiencing this type of physical abuse. This review of the literature is an initial step towards developing a study that can attend to the need for New Zealand-based research on adolescent physical abuse towards mothers and contribute to building theory about this type of interpersonal physical abuse. It is hoped that it will also stimulate discussion about how the phenomenon might be addressed.

Yvonne Crichton-Hill and Nikki Evans are members of the team at Te Awatea Physical Abuse Research Centre and academics at the School of Social Work and Human Services, University of Canterbury. Their research interests are in the fields of family physical abuse and youth physical abuse. Letitia Meadows is a BSW graduate and has a University of Canterbury Doctoral Scholarship to continue her studies as a PhD candidate with the School of Social Work and Human Services.

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Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:00AM (-08:00)

## C. Has A Drug Problem

Saturday, January 10, 2009

Hi Mark

A lot has happened since I last wrote you last. My son C\_\_\_ phoned and said he wanted to come home. I went over to his place and he was cleaning up a bong to sell and the other kid Jeff was smoking up when I got there. I had gone over to talk to C\_\_\_ about his request to my husband about moving home. I walked in on this and just lost it. I yelled at them and C\_\_\_ was bawling his eyes out and Jeff quickly got out of there. C\_\_\_. He told me that he is depressed and needed to come home.

He came home just before C\_\_\_tmas. The lady that signed the lease on the townhouse and the same lady that took him out of the rehab center requested that he sit at her table on C\_\_\_tmas Eve with her family. Even though he knew that we have C\_\_\_tmas Eve at my brother's place, off he went. She gave him \$200 skateboard for C\_\_\_tmas. He stills hangs around with her kids. The other night the older one who is grossly over weight phoned and said that he wanted to go running. It was really cold; I think they were up to something. This kid has been running me down to C\_\_\_ and every time he sees this kid, it is like there has been a brainwashing episode. Everything has been going okay so far a couple of things nothing major. Tonight C\_\_\_ was going out he did not ask for the truck to take, said he was taking the bus to his girlfriend's place and he took his backpack. I looked out the window to see if he took the truck or not after my husband had suggested that he could have it.

I received a call from him 15 mins. later with him trying to start a fight with me and why I was watching him and that I check his eyes etc. Last week we had him at the doctor because he scratched his cornea and the eye has been infected and I have been watching this. I thought he had pink eye. If I get pink eye it is contagious I can not go to work if I catch it, I work in a health care facility and I am exposed to 250 nurses and personal support works. Then he said what more can he do that he is really trying here and that I am watching him etc. He said what do you expect from me. I said I am not arguing here, I expect that he go to school and keep busy, maybe get some more hours at work. He said that the only people that really care about him are the ones that he was doing drugs with, that they ask him how it is going and care about him.

Mark I have really tried here. I think he wanted to pick a fight with me for a good excuse to get loaded tonight and blame it on me. When he was out on his own he would phone and push my buttons and get into a fight and wouldn't phone me for weeks. I think that is why he took the backpack and that is why he didn't take the truck.

What should I do here? I don't ask questions like I use to, I am just listening and getting his feelings out. . I have seen more and more of my kid, but it seems every time he sees here kid (that lady's oldest son) we are 5 steps ahead and 15 back. This kid is the one that when C\_\_\_ said he was giving up drugs and had not done anything for 3 weeks got him doing it again and that was the night he came home on a bad trip and he asked us for us to get him help.

Any suggestions here?

A.

.....  
Hi A.,

If your son is like most of the addicts I work with, a drug is the most important thing in his life -- more important than physical and mental health ...more important than family, work, education, etc.

Until he becomes actively involved in some form of Intensive Outpatient Treatment, he will continue to struggle with priorities (i.e., drugs will always come first).

If he has not had treatment for chemical abuse/dependency yet, this will be your first step in helping him move toward recovery. You can make it a mandatory thing that will dictate whether or not he continues to live with you.

Bottom line: This drug problem will NOT go away until he receives treatment (and even then, there is no guarantee that he will not relapse periodically - at least in the early stages of recovery).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:42AM (-08:00)

## Aspergers & Sound Therapy

Saturday, January 10, 2009

Hi, I was wondering if anybody has tried sound therapy with their children, like Tomatis or AIT and what the results were?? My son was recently diagnosed with possibly Aspergers at 3 years of age, he is now 4-- he really does not act or behave in ways that are typical for Aspergers- by that I mean he does not need to stick to a rigid routine or have difficulty with new transitions--he does have different play behaviors- forms bottles, crayons and utensils and makes them into different shapes or numbers and is fascinated with both letters, numbers and music but has other areas of interest as well but not as strong of an interest. He definitely has some sensory issues going on and I was wondering if sound therapy could help this??

Please help??

Thanks—Christina

.....

Autism is a mystifying condition, which causes kids to become emotionally isolated from the world around them.

Aspergers is higher functioning autism, meaning the symptoms are milder and the child functions well or above average in many areas of life while still having certain abnormalities in their way of relating to others.

A definite cause of autism or Aspergers is not known, but a contributing factor is believed to be distortion in the reception of sensory information.

Many kids with autism exhibit extreme sensitivity to noise. Some frequencies are actually painful for them to hear. Sound Therapy pioneer Dr Tomatis suggests that, in order to shut out painful sounds or other unwanted stimuli, the child closes down the hearing mechanism so that certain sounds cannot penetrate the consciousness.

On a physiological level, this closing off of the ear is achieved by a relaxation of the muscles of the middle ear. Over time, these muscles lose their tonicity. Sounds are then imprecisely perceived and, as a result, incorrectly analyzed.

Tomatis believes that the reluctance of autistic kids to communicate results from the closing off of their being to auditory input. Although they may understand what is said to them, they have tuned out many of the frequencies in the sound and have thus tuned out the emotional content of the message.

Sound Therapy offers a child with autism the opportunity to re-open the listening capacity. The fluctuating sounds produced by the Electronic Ear gradually exercise and tone the ear muscles, teaching the ear to respond to and recognize the full range of frequencies. As this happens, communication takes on new meanings, and the child begins to respond where before he or she was unreachable.

Tomatis discovered that because of the way the fetal ear develops, the first sounds heard in utero are high frequency sounds. The child hears not only the mother's heartbeat and visceral noises but also her voice. Re-awakening the child's ability to hear high frequencies re-creates this earliest auditory experience and enables emotional contact to be made with the mother first and then with others.

Kids with speech difficulties should listen to Sound Therapy every day for 30 to 60 minutes per day or more if desired. Regular daily listening is essential for the right ear dominance to be achieved. The Let's Recite tape in the Family Kit is good to use for kids with speech difficulties as it gives them the opportunity to repeat what is said and integrate their speaking with their new experience of listening. Another good exercise for kids with any form of speech difficulty is speaking into a microphone while monitoring their voice through the right ear. This can be done using a personal cassette player with a microphone and wearing only the right headphone. The child can speak, sing, read or make any vocal sounds.

A similar effect can be achieved without the equipment by simply closing off the right ear with fingers or an ear plug. This increases the volume of the child's own voice in the right ear. This exercise can be done for some time each day in conjunction with the listening.

What Sound Therapy has achieved with Autistic kids—

- Kids who can speak may develop a more appropriate use of language, e.g. beginning to use more personal pronouns ("I", "you") or first names, and using words to express their feelings.
- For kids without language, vocalization has increased, initially as screams and then as babbling.

- Increased eye contact and the kids have a longer attention span.
- Initiate contact rather than waiting to be approached.
- Interactions with their family members have become more affectionate and appropriate.
- Once kids have begun to emerge from their emotional isolation they have shown increasing responsiveness to what they are being taught and to the people who care for them.
- They may begin to laugh and cry at appropriate times.
- They show a greater interest in making contact and communicating with the people around them.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:57AM (-08:00)

## He wants to throw his clean clothes on the floor...

Sunday, January 11, 2009

Dear Mark:

I'm a new parent to your site. I need assistance and want to ensure I'm not being unreasonable with my son. Please advise me.

He wants to throw his clean clothes (that he did agree to wash and dry) on the floor in his closet rather than hang them up. I feel they should be hung up or put into drawers. I don't even care if he folds them. He says he'll just throw them on the floor.

Am I being unreasonable? Should I just provide another "bin", like his dirty clothes bin, and let him throw his clean clothes in there? I don't want to be too demanding; it is his space and his clothes.

Please advise. Thanks.

K.

.....

Hi K.,

Great question. This falls into the "pick-your-battles-carefully" category. I'm sure you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about clothes on the floor.

Are you being unreasonable? Not really. Is it a battle you should fight. No way! Get a clean clothes bin.

Mark

Online Parent Support



Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:49AM (-08:00)

## Agapé Boarding School

Sunday, January 11, 2009

This video is a tour of Agapé Boarding School. We are a non-profit boarding school that specializes in a college preparatory program along...all » This video is a tour of Agapé Boarding School. We are a non-profit boarding school that specializes in a college preparatory program along with behavior modification. Most behavior modification programs do not offer excellent academics and most college preparatory programs do not offer behavior modification. Here you get both for one-third the average cost of other programs!

Online Parent Support endorses Agapé Boarding School  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:53AM (-08:00)

## I honestly received more helpful information out of your program...

Sunday, January 11, 2009

Just a quick note to say thank you for your program. You have done a really great job on this and it was very affordable. My mother bought me a \$300 program – while I must say that any additional tools I get out of it will be worth any cost, I honestly received more helpful information out of your program. My son and I were going down a very ugly spiral – I am a single mom and always the “bad guy”. He got to the point that he simply defied the punishments and the behavior got worse each day.

It has only been a month and school has been out for the last couple weeks, but I feel like we are making progress. This gave us a new direction and I have had much more PEACE! One of the biggest problem areas is the failing grades at school – it really took a load off of me to stop micro-managing that area. Since he had been totally grounded for so long and really got worse when he was simply “ungrounded” altogether, I had him earn the free time by getting passing grades. If he works at school and does homework, it gives him enough “earned time” that he is essentially ungrounded. It also transitioned our house from “negative consequences for bad behavior” to “positive response for good behavior”. The biggest turn around was lowering the bar to the point he couldn’t fail – “Come home from school on time today and you can have an hour of free time tonight”. It gave him a light at the end of the tunnel that he did not have before and he ran to it!

Thanks,

A.

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:58AM (-08:00)

## Thank you for giving me my son back...

Sunday, January 11, 2009

Would you recommend this program to friends or family?  
Definitely. I have recommended it many times already.

Did you get a timely response to your emails?  
I have not needed to email yet, But Mark has kept to his word on everything else, so I am confident emails would be timely.

What was the most helpful feature of Online Parent Support?  
When I started the program, I felt so lost and helpless. Mark said things that made me swear he knew my child personally. Everything I read seemed to be about my child. This was how I knew this program was different, and that it could work. The steps were easy to follow, and the results were fast. When we took the parenting quiz, I scored an 80 and my husband scored 100. This really opened our eyes. Now all 3 of my children are happier and easier to deal with.

What was the least helpful?  
I cannot think of one thing I would change about this program. Thank you so much.

Additional Comments:  
My child had been on medication for ADD for several years. It never seemed to help the way we hoped. His anger was out of control and most of the walls in our home had holes from him punching them. He was violent with his siblings and distant from us. I found your program while looking for a treatment facility to send him away to. I knew it was not safe for his brother and sister if he stayed in our home. About 2 and a half weeks into your program we were able to take him off the medication and he continued to improve. (His doctor insisted we were making a huge mistake and that medication was the only way to help him.) He is changing into a more confident self-controlled person thanks to your program. He used to scream at me how much he hated me. Now when he does not get his way he will yell, "Why are you such a good parent???" God, I love you so much!! Why can't you be a rotten parent like my friends parents???" He will try to sound angry, but he is letting me know he is happier with the way things are now. He is learning to diffuse tense situations as well. We have both become better people. Thank you for giving me my son back.

Online Parent Support - Program Evaluation  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:22AM (-08:00)

## The conflicts we have now are about less critical matters...

Monday, January 12, 2009

Dear Mark,

I ordered your ebook and talked to you on the phone about my daughter a while back and just wanted to say thank you and let you know that your methods work for us! As you predicted, first the frequency of conflicts decreased at first and then later the intensity

decreased. And better yet, the conflicts we have now are about less critical matters, for example, over staying on the internet too long rather than over staying out with unsavory friends too late. We communicate much better, too.

Again, thank you for what you are doing, and for being there to help so many parents like me who have been overwhelmed with raising teenagers.

S.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:17AM (-08:00)

## The Total Transformation?

Monday, January 12, 2009

Hi Mark-

Just to let you know, I spent 300 bucks on the Total Transformation program. Have you heard of it? I wish I had found your site before I made that purchase. Although there are a few tips that were somewhat helpful, it left me largely at a loss on what to do to get my son to cooperate. There was no "transformation". Far from it.

On the other hand, your information - as you said - it not the usual set of parenting strategies that everyone tries to use to no avail. Your videos and phone consult have helped me to get my son back.

Just wanted you to know. You really are worth much more than \$29.00 - but thanks for being affordable - and for being there for "real" assistance rather than for the money.

Eternally grateful,

Marge C.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:18AM (-08:00)

## She attracts the attention of young men in their late teens & e...

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Hi Mark,

I'm the mother of a beautiful, strong willed 12-year-old daughter. She has always been tall for her age but is now 5' 11", 120lbs with blue eyes, long blond hair and naturally tanned looking skin. She looks like a supermodel of about 17 and knows it. Unfortunately she attracts the attention of young men in their late teens & early 20s, will dress in ways to make herself look older, and basically enjoys baiting them. Unfortunately her best friend (a 13 year old without much common sense) met a young man (17years old) through an Internet chat room and invited this person to meet them at the mall for a

movie. (Of course all this sort of thing is kept secret from us through lies.) While at the movie my daughter allowed this boy to kiss her, which then turned into rape. I discovered what happened by accident when I found a pregnancy test kit in my daughter's room. When I asked her about it she told me what happened, was of course very upset, glad that I finally knew and was eager to seek medical screening and agreed to talk to child protection and JERT, a division of the police. She was raped this past August and I discovered it in late October.

Prior to this she had been having sexual type conversations with boys over the Internet and on a household back up mobile phone, which is billed to our business, which we didn't know she was using. Of course we had repeatedly given her the lecture about chatrooms, danger of the Internet, talking or SMSing people you don't know, etc. Her Internet privileges had been pulled a number of times for a month or more for these types of infractions. After discovering the rape, her computer access was removed, the phone was deactivated and she hasn't been allowed to see her friend anywhere except at our house.

At the beginning of January we gave her back her computer privileges along with the warning about not abusing them etc. Last night we discovered that she has been having very illicit sexual conversations on the computer since January 5th with a 15-year-old local boy. We confronted her about this, asked her why on earth she did this after everything that has happened, explained that she was definitely leading this boy on and was walking down a very dangerous road which could ruin her life! All she said was that she was sorry, doesn't know why she does it and fled to her room blocking her door to prevent us coming in. Computer privileges have been removed again.

I have tried, over the last two years or so to teach her how to avoid sexual trouble, dress appropriately (teen fashion which isn't slutty or revealing is OK), no heavy make-up (she "borrows" mine without asking if she doesn't have her own, no talking to strangers no mall or movies without adult accompanying, don't get into a situation where you give someone privacy and control, etc.

Despite what happened, she continues to play the siren when she thinks we aren't watching.

I love my daughter very much, she has SO much potential and a wonderful life to look forward to and she is a pretty good kid – sure I have problems with lying, wagging chores, not doing homework, backchat, sulking, door slamming and the gimmee and getmees but I'm deeply worried about her stubbornness in playing with sexual fire and what the consequences of that could be.

She is only 12 – but in a gorgeous 17-year-old body - how on earth can we protect her from herself during the teen years?

P.S. I received your email book yesterday – it's fantastic. I've tried some of your "tricks" with the other typical teen behavior problems last night and they worked like magic! Thank you.

Best Regards,

J.

.....  
Hi J.,

Sexual acting out and behavior is almost always tough for parents to deal with, even when they understand that, at least to some degree, it's "normal."

Children who demonstrate an unusual interest in sexual matters often have been introduced to it by other adults, children, or by viewing sexual material. It's also possible that having intercourse explained to her when she was young has created some confusion for your daughter that she is "acting out" in her behavior.

My own son was inadvertently shown a sexually explicit cartoon when he was 11, and we went through several months of heightened sexual interest and questions--which gradually disappeared when he realized that he wasn't shocking me and that I would calmly answer any of his questions. Do some thinking about what you want your daughter to believe about sex and intimacy, and then find ways to calmly teach and share those concepts with her.

Your daughter needs teaching about appropriate boundaries and behavior, not punishment. By showing gentle curiosity and asking "what" and "how" questions, you can open the door to talking about sex, rather than having her act it out. You may want to get one of the many excellent books explaining sexuality for children and read it together, openly reminding her that this subject has come up before and you're wondering if she has questions. The phrase, "I've noticed that. . ." is often a good beginning. You can let her know, without anger, that flirting the way she has is not acceptable, but it is okay to have questions and be curious, and that she can ask you anything. Your own attitude (kind and firm) will let her know that you mean what you say. If you are calm, open, and approachable, she may be able to relax enough to explore the subject with you.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:13AM (-08:00)

**From: Parent to an up and coming Adult!**

**Sunday, January 18, 2009**

Mark,

You have no idea how much heartache, or how many stomachaches and headaches you have alleviated for me, or maybe you do... I hope you do! Well if you don't, please know that where I'm concerned, you are a true angel and I just hope you continue doing what you're doing!

Thanks again! =-)

Signed,

Parent to an up and coming Adult!

## For someone who has faced such difficult mental health issues, will...

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Hi Mark,

Thanks so much for your response.

Many of the points you made are right on! We know where we are regarding lack of skills. I think my question is that my son has severe lack of coping skills and challenges re: depression. He's missed out on so much emotional growth because of his depression.

He is so behind that I question whether we can move him ahead on our own as parents. He is willing to go to therapy, but, honestly, usually shuts down at some point.

We are holding him to chores, not giving him any money, he has to do stuff around the house to earn use of the car daily. Still, this is excruciatingly slow. And I don't know whether he will ever decide to get a job. Rather, he just seems willing to sit in the basement when he runs out of money. (He has \$55 left to his name.)

He has so far to go re: dealing with his emotions, accepting responsibility for making decisions and taking actions to move forward with his life . . . I think it would take 2 years if he were in a residential program . . . and we're at home moving at a much slower pace. He would definitely benefit from being somewhere else where someone besides use could hold him to consequences. Here, if he doesn't do something, he still gets to sit in my basement staring at the TV.

I'm not sure how to move forward. He is doing OK at this level, which is definitely better than where he was two months ago. The next level is getting him engaged in something such as a job, volunteer work, even working out at the gym!

My question is for someone who has faced such difficult mental health issues (and still is), will following the same steps we would with a "regular" kid work?

I'm afraid that we will have to evict him eventually and I don't want to do that because I don't want him to come apart again . . . without meds. I guess that's the real issue I have to face.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Re: My question is for someone who has faced such difficult mental health issues (and still is), will following the same steps we would with a "regular" kid work?

He is a regular kid. Are you sure you paid attention to the "reframing" business in Fair Fighting [session #1 - online version].

Here's the reframe for depression (which should be your mantra as a parent of a depressed kid):

Depressed -- overwhelmed, quite, slowing down, taking inventory, reflecting on the past, possibility to rest, gaining strength before some trial or test, to mature important plans, reflection before action, hitting the brakes, placing one's values and/or goals in a new order

You're still feeling sorry for him at some level. This will be -- and is -- a huge obstacle for the entire family.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:09AM (-08:00)

## I have been asked to help care for a young girl...

Friday, January 23, 2009

Dear Mark,

I have been asked to help care for a young girl of a friend of mine. We went to youth court today and I have been given permission to work with the psychologist and school to help this 12 year old. She has been molested on several different occasions and is very defiant with her mother who has been neglectful in the past. She has been diagnosed with ADHD PTSD and a defiance disorder. Her mother has asked me for help and I have some concerns about her behavior. I do not want to put myself at risk of being accused of inappropriate sexual conduct or child abuse. She has a very distorted perception of reality. She lies about everything and she has had a suicide attempt. I watched her lie to a judge today and lie about the cell phone she stole from her mom this morning. I am purchasing your book this evening for her mother. I am not sure how I can help or if I am in too deep.

Her mom called me in hysterics this evening at her wits end. I have been supportive in the past. I have watched this family for several years and I am concerned about the safety of her mother and her little brother. These child's have been in foster care and shuffled around to other people and I think they have experienced abandonment trauma.

The mom wants me to take her daughter for a few weeks and see if I can help to make some changes. As I said before I am concerned about what will happen to me if she accuses me of some sort of abuse. I think that this young lady needs more professional care I am not sure that I have the training for such an undertaking. My job now is to pick her up from school and take care of her for 2 hours every week day after school. I will give her mom your book and I will read it also but I need some advice if I am taking on too much responsibility.

Thank You,  
R.

By the way I have had to do a background check through the FBI to have permission to be involved in her care.

.....

Hi R.,

Re: "...advice if I am taking on too much responsibility."

I don't think so. Good for you to help out like this. However, you will want to protect yourself from false accusations. Please refer to the page below:

Click => <http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/mr-cps.html>

Good luck,

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:13AM (-08:00)

## I will not allow her boyfriend to sleep at our house...

Sunday, January 25, 2009

Hi Mark,

I have not been at peace with myself about this subject for the past 2 years. My daughter, M\_\_\_\_, is a freshman at college, lives on campus and has done very well the first semester. The college is 45 minutes away from our house, so she returns every weekend. I am having a terrible time with my inner peace about her spending nights with her boyfriend from high school, C\_\_\_\_, when she returns home. I will not allow her boyfriend to sleep at our house, but the boyfriend lives with his grandparents who allow my daughter to sleep at their house. At first I was nice to him, but I do not respect him for encouraging her to do this. It has come to me not wanting to face him, so I don't.

A few months ago, I went as far as calling the grandmother to tell her that I am opposed to that behavior and we had a nice chat. Nothing has changed and my daughter at 18 continues to do this. She stayed every single night at the boyfriends over Christmas break. She did this with the last boyfriend as well. It eats me alive and my husband is very accepting of it, so it causes friction between he and I. Half the time, I just don't speak, as I am so upset with this behavior. I have said, "While living in our house, you have rules to follow". "If you want to do this when you have your own expenses and rent, then so be it". My views are never respected and I have come close to moving out of my own home because of it. I feel that if the boyfriend respected me, he would not let M\_\_\_\_ spend the night. It upsets me so much. I am more upset with my husband for letting her get away with it and she knows it. It is so difficult for me to accept this and my husband totally ignores my opinion, which upsets me more. It is a terrible example for my 10th grade daughter. I really resent my 18 yr old. She thinks because she is 18, it is ok. I am more disappointed in her and my husband for tarnishing my value system. We raised our girls with good values, attend church and taught them what is right and what is wrong.



M\_\_\_\_\_ does not want to be involved in any church activities and has strayed from her faith, which hurts me, but I do know some teenagers do.

I need to find peace, and I really try, but I suppress it and then I blow at the first opportunity. I am busy with a job, workout regularly, teach Sunday school and volunteer at the church which gives me great joy, but I continue to feel so sad, embarrassed and disappointed with M\_\_\_\_\_ 's behavior. She seldom eats dinner with us when she is home as she is always out. M\_\_\_\_\_ knows how important it is to me to have a family meal together.

Believe me, my husband and I got counseling from a wonderful man on how to handle her, but the problem is not sleeping at home when she comes home. My husband thinks we should get more counseling, but I now refuse as I have had enough. I do not need someone to tell me how to accept this because I never will. I feel let down by my husband too. My friends are great and offer me great support, which is always uplifting.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

I see two issues here really: (1) the fact that she is staying nights with her boyfriend, and (2) she's not been coming home.

It's natural for a mother to feel some sadness when her child leaves home and spends a lot of time with a boyfriend. It is quite normal to have a little weep now and again – or even go into the absent child's bedroom and sit there for a bit in an attempt to feel closer to her.

We know of a successful, busy and confident woman - an agony aunt, in fact - who admitted she went into her son's bedroom to sniff his T-shirt shortly after he left to go to university for the first time.

So don't be ashamed of your feelings - they are natural.

But if you experience any of the following severe symptoms, you should seek professional help - especially if they go on for longer than a week:

- You feel your useful life has ended.
- You are crying excessively.
- You're so sad you don't want to mix with friends or go to work.

In this kind of situation, what seems to happen is that the child's departure unleashes seriously depressed feelings, and these very definitely need treating.

If you know that your sadness is overwhelming you, do go and discuss your feelings with your counselor as soon as possible. You almost certainly could use some counseling to get your feelings into perspective, and you may need antidepressants.

When your child leaves home, you'll obviously want to keep in touch with her. But don't try and do this excessively.

Be sensitive to the fact that your daughter is trying to take a big, significant step in life - which doesn't actually much to do with you.

Your daughter will need your support, but will not want to feel like you're nagging her. And the more you cling or show that you're upset the boyfriend, the less likelihood there is of her contacting you or coming to visit.

Ration your calls to no more than two a week. Also, try texting or using email instead of phoning. You'll be able to put your feelings succinctly without getting too emotional.

This form of communication will probably suit your daughter better, too. It's much easier for a young person to say 'I really miss you' in a message rather than on the phone, when other students (or a boyfriend) might be listening.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:15AM (-08:00)

## Promoting Children's Self-esteem

Sunday, January 25, 2009

My son is feeling more and more negative about himself. No one ever wants to play with him and it's painful to hear him say such negative things. What do I say to him when he talks like that? It seems like talking positively can make it worse.

.....

Moms & dads, more than anyone else can promote their youngster's self-esteem. It isn't a particularly difficult thing to do. In fact, most moms & dads do it without even realizing that their words and actions have great impact on how their youngster or teenager feels about himself. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind.

When you feel good about your youngster, mention it to him. Moms & dads are often quick to express negative feelings to kids but somehow don't get around to describing positive feelings. A youngster doesn't know when you are feeling good about him and he needs to hear you tell him that you like having him in the family. Kids remember positive statements we say to them. They store them up and "replay" these statements to themselves. Practice giving your youngster words of encouragement throughout each day.

Be generous with praise. Use what is called descriptive praise to let your youngster know when they are doing something well. You must of course become in the habit of looking for situations in which your youngster is doing a good job or displaying a talent. When your youngster completes a task or chore you could say, "I really like the way you straightened your room. You found a place for every thing and put each thing in its place." When you observe them showing a talent you might say, "That last piece you played was great. You really have a lot of musical talent." Don't be afraid to give praise often even in front of family or friends. Also, use praise to point out positive character traits. For instance, "You are a very kind person." Or, "I like the way you stick with things you do even when it seems hard to do." You can even praise a youngster for something he did not do such as "I really liked how you accepted my answer of 'no' and didn't lose

your temper."

Teach your youngster to practice making positive self-statements. Self-talk is very important in everything we do. Psychologists have found that negative self-talk is behind depression and anxiety. What we think determines how we feel and how we feel determines how we behave. Therefore, it is important to teach kids to be positive about how they "talk to themselves." Some examples of useful self-talk are: "I can get this problem, if I just keep trying." "It's OK if our team lost today. We all tried our best and you can't win them all." "It makes me feel good to help others even if the person doesn't notice or thank me."

Avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame. Sometimes it is necessary to criticize a youngster's actions, and it is appropriate that moms & dads do so. When, however the criticism is directed to the youngster as a person it can easily deteriorate into ridicule or shame. It is important to learn to use "I statements" rather than "You statements" when giving criticism. For instance say, "I would like you to keep your clothes in the proper place in your closet or drawers not lying all over your room;" rather than saying "Why are you such a lazy slob? Can't you take care of anything?"

Teach your youngster about decision-making and to recognize when he has made a good decision. Kids make decisions all the time but often are not aware that they are doing so. There are a number of ways moms & dads can help kids improve their ability to consciously make wise decisions. Kids make decisions all the time but often are not aware that they are doing so. There are a number of ways moms & dads can help kids improve their ability to consciously make wise decisions.

1. Allow the youngster to choose one of the solutions only after fully considering the consequences. The best solution will be one that solves the problem and simultaneously makes the youngster feel good about himself.
2. Brainstorm the possible solutions. Usually there is more than one solution or choice to a given dilemma, and the parent can make an important contribution by pointing out this fact and by suggesting alternatives if the youngster has none.
3. Help the youngster clarify the problem that is creating the need for a decision. Ask him questions that pinpoint how he sees, hears, and feels about a situation and what may need to be changed.
4. Later join the youngster in evaluating the results of that particular solution. Did it work out well? Or did it fail? if so, why? Reviewing the tactics will equip the youngster to make a better decision the next time around.

Develop a positive approach to providing structure for your youngster. All kids and teens need to accept responsibility for their behavior. They should learn self-discipline. To help kids learn self-discipline, the parent needs to adopt the role of coach/teacher rather than that of disciplinarian and punisher. Learn the "Three Fs" of positive parenting. (Discipline should be fair, firm and friendly).

Ten additional steps you can take to help your youngster develop a positive self-image:

1. Encourage your kids to ask for what they want assertively, pointing out that there is no guarantee that they will get it. Reinforce them for asking and avoid anticipating their

desires.

2. Encourage your kids to behave toward themselves the way they'd like their friends to behave toward them.

3. Encourage your kids to develop hobbies and interests which give them pleasure and which they can pursue independently.

4. Help kids learn to focus on their strengths by pointing out to them all the things they can do.

5. Help your kids develop "tease tolerance" by pointing out that some teasing can't hurt. Help kids learn to cope with teasing by ignoring it while using positive self-talk such as "names can never hurt me," "teases have no power over me," and "if I can resist this tease, then I'm building emotional muscle."

6. Help your kids think in terms of alternative options and possibilities rather than depending upon one option for satisfaction. A youngster who has only one friend and loses that friend is friendless. However, a youngster who has many friends and loses one, still has many. This same principle holds true in many different areas. Whenever you think there is only one thing which can satisfy you, you limit your potential for being satisfied! The more you help your kids realize that there are many options in every situation, the more you increase their potential for satisfaction.

7. Laugh with your kids and encourage them to laugh at themselves. People who take themselves very seriously are undoubtedly decreasing their enjoyment in life. A good sense of humor and the ability to make light of life are important ingredients for increasing one's overall enjoyment.

8. Let kids know they create and are responsible for any feeling they experience. Likewise, they are not responsible for others' feelings. Avoid blaming kids for how you feel.

9. Let kids settle their own disputes between siblings and friends alike.

10. Teach kids to change their demands to preferences. Point out to kids that there is no reason they must get everything they want and that they need not feel angry either. Encourage them to work against anger by setting a good example and by reinforcing them when they display appropriate irritation rather than anger.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:24AM (-08:00)

## Re: Negative Peer Influence

Monday, January 26, 2009

Mark:

Thanks for being there. I have a problem I need to act fast on. Over weekend my 15 (almost 16) daughter was caught by police at a party gone bad. They found her on the street and held her until we picked her up in the police car - she was not charged. The

house was trashed according to the police officer. We also found out that she was at another party on Friday night and was given a ride home from a senior - she has been told we do not want her in car with kids. She has become a very believable liar. She is very vague with story and sticks to main points. I asked her again, to let me know what happened on Saturday and she repeated same story and asked for phone back - that she should not be grounded based on being at the wrong place at the wrong time. She and friends were picking up someone and had to go to door to get them, because their phone went dead - both of them. Anyways, at that moment the police came and everyone took off. She and a couple of the boys were held, but her girlfriend, who walked away to talk on the phone with boyfriend got in the car with someone else and took off. This is the same girl's sister that bought her tickets for her to go to ALice in WONderland, which is an underground party scene which allows you to use your imagination while on drugs. At this place, the girl's boyfriend overdosed on acid and was taken to the emergency room. We take our daughter away on most weekends to avoid the party scene. She has repeatedly told us to find her a boarding school she hates being with us. It could be away to get away with saving face with her friends. The parents of her friends do not want to be involved or know what is going on - so they are of no help. We found out late last night from a neighbor's son that she was at parties Friday and Saturday. On Saturday, she did smell of some sort of alcohol. We have all the phones and told her she lost the phone for 3 days, but it needs to be more. She is in way over her head and not one of her "friends" is any good. We have cut all communications with her "friends" - but when I checked the texts on her phone - it was almost like a merit badge that she was with cops. I know they love drama, but how stupid. We think it might be better to move and start over - we have been told that it never works, but I do not know how to get her away. We in the mean time think we should tell her she can only see her friends at our house - I do not want them here either, but don't know what else to do. She had other friends that seem like they would be a better crowd, but does not see them - almost like it would be a downgrade to be with them. I think our daughter wants to be good, but gets caught up in the drama. When we get her away, she seems happy again and is a joy to be around. She has a great sense of humor. When she is home and by her friends, she is so angry and everything makes her mad that we do or say. We have three children 19,15, and 13. She is in the middle and the boys are on either side. She is very disrespectful at times, usually when her friends are with her. Where in the past, we have bent the rules and allow her yet another chance, this time we are being strong and not bending. We give her positive reinforcement and always try to ask questions to show we are interested, but get little response. We are following the program, but seems like we have to step it up.

B.

.....

Hi B,

The effects of peer influence are remarkably strong. Adolescents' social anxiety (i.e., their fears about others not liking them) is a major factor affecting their vulnerability to peer influence. Those high in social anxiety are especially likely to be influenced by peers, even if the peers are not highly popular/liked.

Many interventions try to change adolescents' aggressive and risk behavior using rational arguments, persuasive information and "fear-appeals" that emphasize the negative consequences that follow from such behavior. But a more effective route involves changing not adolescents' own attitudes but their perceptions of the attitudes of their

peers.

You lead them to think, "This behavior does not fit with my group, or with the group to which I want to belong."

So what can you do? Relocating will not change the source of the problem (i.e., the way your daughter is influenced by peers). She will be "influenced" no matter where you go. It's not a question of whether or not she will be influenced; rather it is a question of what group will influence her. There are as many negative peers in Milwaukee as there are in Texas.

Thus, exposing her to a better group of people (e.g., church group, YWCA, Big Sister programs, various school programs) may be a better alternative to explore.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:11AM (-08:00)

## She keeps saying really mean things to and about her peers at school...

Thursday, January 29, 2009

Hi Mark,

I have a problem which has been ongoing on and off for a while. My 14 year old daughter (the eldest of twins) keeps saying really mean things to and about her peers at school. Oh I should mention this twin always seems to be in competition with her twin sister, but this is not the case for twin sister. I hope that made sense.

She keeps blaming everything on her twin sister when it goes wrong with her peers and will not take responsibility for her actions or for saying mean things to her peers. She just expects her friends to keep taking the meanness and just keep going on with life as if she has said nothing mean. I try to explain to her that her peers are getting fed up with the meanness and that she will not have any friends if she keeps it up. When I try to explain this, she flies off the handle, saying "I don't want to talk about it and stay out of it." Every time her friends get funny with her she wonders why they are like it and blames her twin sister for taking her friends away from her. I have tried to explain that it has nothing to do with her sister and that her friends have a mind of their own and make their own decisions as to who they want to associate with, but she still blames her sister. Two of her friends are so angry with her for things she has said over the school break and you can see the anger in them when the 14 year old is around. She will not speak with anyone etc (counsellor) saying they are gay (an Australian terminology for stupid). What can I do as I don't want to go through another year of this. How do I teach her to take responsibility for her words and actions without it looking like I am favouring her sister and what strategies can I give her twin sister to also cope with this? I hope this is enough information. Oh and they are in different classes at school.

I am at my wits end with this matter, please help.

Regards,

P.

.....

Hi P.,

The strategy that you will want to use here is in session #3 - online version - entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid."

Please review that section (including the videos). I will be glad to help you plug your specific situation into that strategy if needed (i.e., use your specific example rather than the ones I made up for instruction purposes).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:44AM (-08:00)

## When Children Misbehave While On Family Vacation

Monday, February 02, 2009

Hello Mark,

I trust you had a nice Christmas and New Year and hope all is well with you and your family.

I don't know whether you've taken time off work so don't feel obliged to respond to this email if you are still on holidays....!

I've run into a spot of bother with A\_\_\_ (and M\_\_\_) and am unsure of what to do now. We have just had a 10-day (interstate) holiday at the beach and it was the worst holiday I've ever spent with this child. Her behaviour became appalling and consisted of alternating between constant whining and whining, ignorance of any request, arguing nonstop, fighting with other children and verbal abuse. I would remind her (when I had the energy) that the way she was speaking to me was unacceptable but Martin tried to just ignore her because he thought if I reprimanded her, she was getting a reaction and that's what she wanted. I'd have a lot of trouble letting ANYbody speak to me the way she was and so then we started to constantly disagree (with your words "ignoring behaviour is an overrated parenting technique" echoing in my head..!)

I am now in a really bad headspace, my eyesight is deteriorating again due to MS or stress or whatever, and now that we are home I feel like we are back where we started with you 4 or 5 months ago. My question to you is, how do we keep things going when the circumstances change? She had no money on the holiday because she hadn't done enough work prior to our leaving but when we went out to eat (which we had to do a lot) it's hard to deny her and ice cream for example when the other kids are having one. My mother only sees her once or twice a year and so gave her a few things when she visited

(although mum did say she was now very worried about her with a view to what the future would hold for this willful and defiant child) and my mother doesn't voice an unrequested opinion lightly....

The topic of sending her away to school was raised as well but we would have to find a school strict enough to settle her down and it's all too hard.

It's her 9th birthday on Jan 28th and I've said there will be no party (I've given her a little one every 2nd year till now and she is due this year) because she was so difficult whilst we were away. Perhaps we will just have to forgo a holiday in the future, I don't know.

Appreciate your time and thoughts when you can Mark,

L.

.....

Re: My question to you is, how do we keep things going when the circumstances change?

To all parents whose children misbehave while on vacation:

Your kid has misbehaved horribly! I can picture you now, thumbing frantically through the ebook, looking for the list of ways to choose a consequence. No, no, no. That won't do! I'm breaking it down into steps so you can think about it. This is not paint-by-numbers parenting!

Points to consider:

- Can you support the consequence with your actions? Does it make sense in terms of your family's values? Say you value time spent together. If the TV is located in a central location, and the consequence is that the child is not allowed to watch TV (and therefore is banned from the living room while the TV is on), then don't sit and watch TV all evening. If you do, you're applying more than the stated consequence of separating the child from the television—you're separating the child from you.
- Check it against the requirements—is it based in nature, is it based in logic? Does it fulfill the 4-Rs (related, respectful, reasonable, rewarding)? Will your child learn from it?
- Consider what you want the consequence to achieve. The point of all discipline is to teach your child internal control over her behavior. You're training her conscience, and her ethics. You're teaching her how the world works. Long after you're dead and buried, this conscience, ethical sense and knowledge of the world should still be instructing her on how to behave.
- Consider whether you'll be able to follow through on the consequence. Saying, "That's it, we're not going on vacation!" is not only unreasonable, it's unrealistic. Yes, you are going on vacation. You need it, the tickets have been purchased, the hotel reserved.
- Whenever you're applying consequences, take as much time as you need, remember to keep consequences close to the action, do your best, and forgive yourself for making mistakes.



## Defining Consequences Ahead of Time (a good thing to do before going on a vacation)

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Whenever possible, it's best to define consequences ahead of time. It takes a little time, but the advantages are enormous:

- This forces you to think about it, right?
- It will get you away from that “I’ll show you,” punitive frame of mind, and back into the “Zen of inevitability.” You’ll be calm, cool, and collected.
- You won’t have to think through a veil of red anger, or stall until you’ve talked with your parenting partner. Consequences work best when they are immediate.

Predefined consequences are the other half of family rules and personal limits. An easy way to predefine consequences is to sit down with any lists you’ve already made of family rules and your child’s limits. Take each rule and limit and rewrite it in the following form:

- Rule or limit. If rule or limit is broken, then consequence.

Here are two examples:

- We do not eat at the computer. If anybody eats at the computer, the consequence will be:
- Robert’s bedtime is 8:30 on school nights. If Robert doesn’t go to bed, the consequence will be:

Setting up the consequences ahead of time doesn’t always work, nor is it always appropriate. Here are two disadvantages of predefining consequences:

- It puts you into a negative frame of mind while you’re making your list—everything is looked at in terms of what can go wrong, instead of expecting, assuming, and supporting that everything will go right.
- It doesn’t figure in the flexibility required. There may be extenuating circumstances, or the consequences defined may not actually fit when the moment comes.

When you’re called upon to think up consequences immediately and on the spot use this short, succinct, and highly effective technique called STAR. It was developed by communication expert William Sonnenschein.

STAR stands for Stop, Think, Ask, Respond:

- Stop: Breathe, calm yourself, take 10.
- Think: Think about what is really going on, about what your child needs, and about her positive intent.
- Ask: Here’s where you can use active and proactive listening, to get your child’s perspective (yes, this step is necessary!).
- Respond: Apply a consequence that satisfies the 4-Rs.

Letting the Child Decide—

Older kids who are experienced in making fun choices (ice cream or cake? Swimming or ice skating?) can start working with you to determine appropriate consequences. Before you start asking your kids to help you determine their own consequences, make sure they've had positive experiences with choice making, and are old enough to understand how consequences work (logical, natural, the 4-Rs, and so on).

#### Avoiding Inappropriate Consequences—

There are so many varieties and examples of illogical and inappropriate consequences that I'm a little leery about bringing them up at all. If a consequence isn't natural or logical, if it doesn't fit the 4-Rs and it doesn't teach anything, then it's inappropriate. There's another kind of inappropriate consequence to watch for: the double-dip.

#### Words to Parent By—

A double-dip consequence is a consequence one step removed—a consequence applied because the parent is upset that a child has done something away from home that required somebody else to apply discipline. Double-dip consequences are very common, but highly inappropriate. An extreme example: A child is spanked for “earning” (and getting) a spanking from somebody else: unjust, unfair, and punitive.

Here are some examples of double-dip consequences:

- Disciplining your child because he was disciplined at school. You can and should talk about what happened, chat about the child's feelings (and your own), and brainstorm ways of avoiding similar situations in the future.
- Natural consequences often lend themselves to double-dipping. Be wary! People have a tendency to scold or discipline a child for letting a natural consequence occur. If Maurice's favorite toy breaks because he threw it against the wall, it's double-dipping (and inappropriate) for you to scold and berate him for breaking it. He will learn more from the natural consequence if you simply talk with him in a kind, firm way about what happened, how he (and you) feels, and how to avoid the situation in the future.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:47AM (-08:00)

## I wish I had this information when I left the hospital after delive...

Tuesday, February 03, 2009

Thanks Mark,

I spent the day going over week one and I just want to say that I find your information so great. I wish I had this information when I left the hospital after delivering my son. Thank goodness he is only 7-years-old and I have access to this help while he is still young. I have also gotten him into a child psychologist and a regular counselor; also he just started a special program at a new school for kids with ODD diagnosis. Thank you so

very much, you put all the info together for me.... a light bulb moment...thank you...thank you!

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:22AM (-08:00)

## I am more empowered today...

Thursday, February 05, 2009

I am more empowered today. I was able to get through the first few chapters quickly because I had already implemented things like the poker face and take care of me. When I went to the next chapter, I started into my next training and loved it. I do feel there is hope.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:10AM (-08:00)

## He has been boozing...

Sunday, February 08, 2009

Hi Mark.

I am email you for advice. I had emailed and told you my son C\_\_ had moved home after being out on his own. It has been a struggle. He is off of drugs and has sub it for booze. This week he found out that he has been boozing, he said it is to get the edge off. He is scared about applying for college and what direction he will go etc. etc. We found the booze in our house drank etc. On Friday, the old C\_\_ had returned, he went out with his girlfriend and he came home when he was expected and came in and touch base with me and apologized to my husband for being 5 mins. late. No big deal we said, they had gone to a late movie and he drove her home. This was the old C\_\_. Last night he went out to a friend's place, his girlfriend met up with him and he snuck her in his room. I had not heard him come in and it was 2:00 am. he was suppose to be in at 1:00. I told A\_\_ she had to leave his room. He was drunk and they went downstairs to the rec room. My husband and I went to the rec room and I told C\_\_ that there is no problem with A\_\_ staying the night we have a guest bedroom. I was called every name in the book he just snapped and then my husband started yelling at him. I told A\_\_ I would drive her home. She told me that she had never seen this side of him, and why did he just snap. I told her it was the booze and that when he was on drugs this is how he gets. That we had a concern about him, because of our backgrounds with alcohol that people in our family at a point act like this. That he is a good person but that this is the problem we are facing now. When I got home, he had gone for a knife and was going to kill himself my husband and him got into a fight. P\_\_ got the knife away from him. He then took off out the door. We called the police, they came and took him to the crisis center. This morning the hospital called to pick him up, that he was not a threat to himself. We sat down as a family, and told him that the next time the police were called that he will be removed from the house for good.

What are your thoughts?

.....

Why wait for another bout of chaos before you make a move? Plans should be drafted and discussed immediately so that he can get back out on his own as soon as possible. Most parents attempt to change a child or situation through reason and discussion, usually one-on-one. When this fails, frustration may lead to anger. This can go on for years. Appeals to reason and one-on-one discussions rarely produce change in someone engaged in self-destructive behaviors.

Begin making plans for him to move out - before, not after - another crisis occurs.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:14PM (-08:00)

## Modified Grounding

Sunday, February 08, 2009

I have ordered your e-book and have spent the last couple of days reading through the online version. ODD is not recognised in this country (yet) but you describe my son to a tee. He is 15 and we have had problems with him since he started school at the age of 3. However, things have come to a head of late. He is on the verge of being excluded from school with only 8 school week until his main exams start. He was in trouble with the police this week for the first time and was cautioned with criminal damage.

We have always been strict parents and have never given him everything he wants, but still comes out as a highly overindulged child (score 83) and he fits every trait you mentioned (except malicious gossip).

However my question is this. We have always used grounding as a consequence and up until the last month or so he has adhered to it. But now he refuses to accept the grounding and just walks out of the house. I feel powerless to ground him now as he just ignores me and his father and goes. At the beginning I was phoning all his friends to try and find him, but the last couple of times this week I haven't bothered and he has come home at the time he is supposed to.

Tonight he asked to stay out at his friends til 10pm and I said I would like him home at 9 as this is becoming the norm of asking for an extension everytime he goes out. I then said (following your programme) that if he stayed out until 10 then he would have a consequence, to which he replied we would just have to wait and see until tomorrow came and see what I could do about it.

We are both at our wits' end and don't know how to handle this, as part of your course is grounding. Can you give us any advice please. Have thought of doing something else apart from grounding, but then that means that he is in control of the situation?

Many thanks for any advice you are able to give.

Kind regards

M.

.....

Many parents use grounding as a discipline technique with their older children. However, when parents ground their children for long periods (e.g., several weeks or more) it often loses its effectiveness because there is typically little incentive for children to behave well during the grounding. Also, when parents ground children for a long period of time, they often give in and reduce the length of grounding because of the restraints it places on the whole family. When this happens, children learn their parents won't follow through with the grounding they impose.

The modified grounding procedure described below involves brief and intense grounding but the child is allowed the opportunity to earn his or her way off grounding by completing a job assignment. This technique is most appropriate for older children (e.g., 10-16 year olds).

\*Develop a job list. The first step in initiating the modified grounding technique is to sit down with your child and develop a list of 10-15 jobs that often need to be done around the home. Do not sit down with your child to start this procedure at a time when your child is about to be punished. Choose a time when your child is behaving well to discuss the technique and to generate a list of jobs. These jobs should not be chores that your child is expected to do on a regular basis. These jobs should take a significant amount of time to complete (e.g., at least 1-2 hours). The jobs should also be things that your child is capable of doing. Examples of such jobs include washing the windows in the house, cleaning out the garage, and cleaning the bathroom.

\*Write each job description down on an index card. The next step is to write each individual job on a separate index card. This description should include a very detailed description of exactly what is required to do the job satisfactorily. For example, cleaning the garage would involve removing all objects from the garage, removing cobwebs on the ceilings, sweeping the floor, hosing/scrubbing the floor, and replacing objects in an organized and neat fashion. If some jobs are relatively brief, it is possible to combine jobs together so that all cards have a job assignment that will take approximately the same total time to complete.

\*Explain the procedure. After this list has been generated, your child should be told that when he or she misbehaves to the degree that grounding is necessary, this new discipline technique will be used. Immediately after the misbehavior has occurred, the child will be told he or she is grounded and an index card will be picked at random. The child will be completely grounded until that job has been completed to the parent's satisfaction. For particularly significant misbehavior, more than one card can be drawn.

\*Define what grounding means. Grounding is severe and means staying in one's own room (or an assigned room) except for attending school, eating meals, or performing chores. During grounding there should be no television, no video games, no radio or tape players, no other games/toys, no visitors, no telephone calls, no snacks, no reading materials except school books, and no outside social activities. If a family outing is scheduled, a sitter should be used so that the grounded child remains at home while the parents and other family members can still go on the family outing.

\*Explain the rules one time only. It is critical that you not nag your child about the jobs to be done. The rules of grounding should only be explained to your child once.

\*Check your child's work. After your child has completed the assigned job(s) he or she should come to you so that his or her performance can be checked. If the job has been done well, it is important to briefly praise your child for the job performance and inform him or her that the grounding is over. If the job has not been completed satisfactorily, briefly provide feedback to your child on the aspects of the job that have been done well and those that need additional work. Be specific in what additional work needs to be done. Try to handle corrective feedback in a matter-of-fact manner without nagging, lecturing, or becoming upset.

Using this modified grounding procedure, your child earns his or her way off grounding. Therefore, your child basically determines how long the grounding will last. Grounding may last anywhere from just a few hours to several days. If the grounding lasts more than several days, it is important to check to make sure your child is being appropriately grounded (e.g., they're not sneaking television/radio).

This modified grounding procedure can be a very effective discipline technique for older children (e.g., 10-16 year olds). However, it is critical that parents also remember to frequently praise and give their children positive feedback when they are behaving well. As with any punishment technique, grounding will only be optimally effective when there is a positive and loving relationship between parents and their children.

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:49PM (-08:00)

## Divorced Couple Disagrees On How To Discipline Their Children

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Mark,

I'm new to your program, and just getting ready to do the assignments for week 1. My x-wife has custody of my daughter, though I have her at my house about 50% of the time. My question has to do with my x-wife. She undercuts any discipline that I have ever tried with my daughter. The first week has shown me that I am an overindulgent parent. My x-wife is off the charts overindulgent. I can never get her on the same page with me for very long. When my 16-year-old daughter goes out of control, my x-wife will want to work with me until my daughter goes to work on her. Then she takes her side. What do recommend with respect to my x-wife? She has never wanted to participate in any counseling and really seems to convince herself that there is nothing wrong (usually this happens when my daughter behaves for a short period of time). I love your program, the first week has taught me more than I ever could have imagined.

Thanks,

J.

.....

Hi J.,

It's not surprising that parents have differing views on the best way to discipline their children. Working out those differences requires clarity and perspective.

Other matters can usually be resolved by compromise or agreeing on which parent will set the rules about particular issues. Even so, forming a united front on discipline is often more easily said than done. Here are some ideas that may help:

- Ask why the other parent wants to discipline in a particular way. Listen to their response without interrupting. Be respectful, caring, and patient.
- Ask yourself why you are opposed to your parenting partner's method. What are you afraid will happen?
- Be prepared for behavioral problems. Remember that many changes in children's behaviors are linked to their stage of normal development. It should come as no surprise that your toddler becomes defiant or your preschooler has an occasional temper tantrum. Talk ahead of time about how each of you would handle these predictable situations. That way you'll have fewer conflicts when they occur.
- Don't be trapped by your past. That includes both your own childhood and the style of discipline you may have used in an earlier marriage. Look for ways to explore, with your ex-spouse, your unquestioned assumptions about disciplining children. One good way to do that is to take a parenting class together. That does two things: It helps you realize how differently other people respond to the same situations you face as parents, and it gives you and your ex-spouse a common base of information from which to develop your shared approaches to discipline.
- Don't let negative childhood experiences determine your decision making about discipline. Keep your focus on the positive aspects of your family life in childhood to bring to your current parenting practices. This approach will free you to replace discipline strategies that don't work for both parents because of beliefs based in families of origin with solution-focused practices that respect and continue the positive experiences of both parents' childhoods.
- Explore discipline options, balancing the pros and cons. Decide which responses are most constructive for your parenting goals.
- Find out how the other parent wants the child to behave in the future.
- Find out what the other parent is afraid will happen if he/she doesn't discipline their particular way.
- Negotiate a Plan in Calm Waters. Sit down with your ex-spouse and try to agree on ways to discipline at a time when nothing is wrong. When you discuss things calmly, you're more likely to come up with a plan you can both stick to. This will allow you to talk about what's best for your child, and not "who's right."
- Present a Unified Front. Kids understand when their parents feel differently about disciplining, no matter what their age. Children will often get away with misbehaving simply by creating an argument between you and your ex-spouse — and this not only lets them off the hook, it creates a problem between the parents. Make sure that your child

sees both parents following the same guidelines, no matter what the scenario. Once your kids start receiving the same treatment from both parents, they'll stop using your disagreements as a way to avoid punishment.

- Put your childhood experiences in historical perspective. Gender roles, child safety issues, environmental factors, and cultural norms change dramatically across the generations. What worked for your family 'back in the day' may not transfer comfortably to your current family situation. What are the issues in modern family life that trigger a strong belief that the values and child-rearing practices from your childhood are important to uphold and continue in your own family?

- Recognize that strong beliefs about child rearing may have their basis in childhood family experiences. At the same time, know that your ex-spouse's beliefs have the same powerful roots.

- Recognize What Your Arguments Do to Your Children. No child likes to see his or her parents fight. When you argue about what to do with your kids, you create a troubling environment for them, which could have serious long-term effects. Fighting with your ex-spouse shifts the focus away from your child — and how they can learn to stop misbehaving — and on to a "parent versus parent" situation.

- Remember the positive experiences from your childhood. Think about your everyday life rather than the major events. What was going on around you during those happy times? It's fun to share these memories with your family, so make them a part of your traditions and family life. What are the positive values and childhood experiences that you want to uphold and continue in your family?

- Have a conversation between parents about the ways childhood histories may be influencing the disagreement about discipline. Take a problem-solving approach to identify:

1. What is the specific child-rearing issue that is causing disagreement between parents?
2. What are the feelings and beliefs that each parent has about the issue that may be rooted in childhood family history?
3. What problem-solving alternatives can each of you commit to that will resolve the disagreement and unite both parents in adapting the beliefs and practices of your families of origin to your family life today?

Lastly, always keep in the back of your mind that a weaker parenting plan supported by both parents is much better than a stronger plan supported by only one.

I hope this helps,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:55AM (-08:00)



# Father-Figure & Son Conflict

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Dear Mark,

My son wants my partner out of the house & is telling me to choose. He is mega angry. I've told him it is not his decision. But I am feeling very crushed & overwhelmed. My partner is too, but he is angry with my son in a sulky sort of way & the atmosphere here is a tinderbox. I feel very stuck, torn and scared.

.....

Here are some tips re: father-figure and son conflict:

- As weird, ironic and contrary to what seems apparent as it is, these situations can sometimes (sometimes) be worked out fairly simply. At least doing this in the context of counseling -- sort of a one-two punch -- it is possible to help a kid accept that a) his dad loves him but has a hard time managing his behavior to show him, b) he can love his biological dad without being in danger of being hurt emotionally as long as he doesn't expect dad to be perfect or take missed contacts and whatnot as evidence of an inner lack of personal worth, c) he can have a much better, rewarding relationship with his father-figure and can actually then have two dads, d) he can use the experience (if he's a he) to burn into his memory how it feels to be on the kid end of this crappy situation and resolve not to do this to his own son some day, e) he can give mom credit for loving him enough to try to find him an additional (not a replacement) dad to make sure he had enough dad-figures in his life, and f) he can sort things out so he realizes suffering and complex relationships can work out so you are smarter and feel better afterward.

- Contrary to apparent expression of feelings, father-figure is probably not the problem at all. Of course it is always possible that a father-figure is really a sadistic jerk. However, assuming that is not the case, it is not likely that the solution is to dissolve the relationship. It's my experience that such kids are very hungry for a good relationship with a father-figure -- actually any father -figure. They want a good relationship with their biological father and are well aware that this is just not going to happen with him. This is an enormous struggle for the child.

- Find a counselor that works well with kids. For starters, it can be very helpful to get the child into counseling with a counselor that has a good track record working with such kids.

- Father-figure can come through all this feeling like a major hero and looking like a hero to his lady friend, his new kid-figures and everyone around. It is way cool to feel like a hero. This can work out with dad feeling like a hero even though it starts with such anger and resentment.

- Father-figure in all likelihood can, with a bit of luck, find something fun to do with the child that can be fun for both. Sometimes it is tough and a counselor can help a lot in this area. Basic rule of thumb is the trick is to find something the child likes to do that father-figure can do with him -- it doesn't work as well to have the child do things with father-figure that father-figure likes to do.

- Father-figure will be happier and have more patience if he reinterprets the hatefulness as a cry for help to a safe, strong father-figure. It doesn't make it easy but it makes it WAY easier.
- The child identifies with the biological father. Any negativity about his father will be experienced as negativity about him. Thus, telling him his dad is a loser will translate to telling him he, himself, is a loser. Telling him his dad loves him but has a lot of trouble dealing with emotions and straightening out his behavior is more helpful. That is also, in all likelihood, what is actually happening with the son.
- The child is feeling thrown away, devalued, unwanted. In spite of all sorts of people saying the opposite, you can probably assume that the child is struggling with a great deal of anger toward himself -- assuming that he has done something to make his dad so angry, unloving, inconsiderate and touchy. This doesn't go away with talking. This goes away -- maybe -- as people demonstrate this is not the case. An experienced counselor can help with ideas about how to accomplish this while also working on opening up the child's willingness to change his mind.
- The child is probably experiencing a great deal of stress, conflict and confusion. You cannot rely on what he is saying. Adults get very confused, hostile and grumpy under far less frustrating, distressing circumstances. It is no mystery that a child would. Adults will tell you what is wrong but they may be very, very wrong. It is easier, sometimes, to figure out what is going on without asking the person who is so confused, upset and distressed.
- Understand that when the son is dumping hateful emotions on father-figure, this is probably an attempt to get some help dealing with his emotions, confusion and stress. It is also probably an indication that father-figure is seen as safe to "reach out to" in order to get help. Yes, it's a lot of stress to dump on poor father-figure, but kids in these situations do not feel comfortable confronting their biological dad. Confronting him would result in harsh retribution and a quick termination of the relationship. This is known pretty clearly.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:19AM (-08:00)

## Disagreement about body piercing...

Thursday, February 19, 2009

Hi L.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

Hi, overall my 15 year old daughter is following the rules. The assertive parenting techniques definitely help. However, we have had a long running disagreement about body piercing. She wants to pierce her lips and I said "no piercing". We had come to a compromise - I would pay for her hair care (that can get expensive!) and she wouldn't do any piercings.

== > Body piercings (not tattoos though) fall into the "pick-your-battles-carefully" category. I'm sure you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about a piercing. Save your energy for the more important issues.

Well, last night I came home and lo and behold she had pierced her bottom lip! I told her to take them out and she refused.

So, I grounded her - indefinitely until she takes the piercings out. Her response was that I couldn't force to stay home - she would come and go as she pleases.

== > Are you sure you went through all the material? We never ground indefinitely. Grounding procedures are covered in Sessions #2 and #3 [online version of the eBook].

This is true, I can't force her. However, my reply was that while I couldn't force her to stay home I could start taking things away from her - anything I had paid for I could take away. No comment from her. I guess she thought about it for awhile and emailed her reply.

Her reply was that she had been cutting herself because she had been depressed and discovered that piercing was a more acceptable way of feeling the pain than cutting.

== > This was a good line of bullshit from your daughter.

Now, she had been seeing a therapist for depression and the therapist thought she had gotten past that. My response was to call her bluff - make an appt. with the therapist and hang tough with the 'no piercings' rule. Am I on the right track?

== > Calling her bluff is good. However, I think you are in a power struggle that you will not win. A body piercing is not really a behavioral issue per say (such as skipping school, violating curfew, drinking alcohol, etc.). As long as it is not done excessively (we can talk about what would be excessive some other time), a piercing should be allowed for a 15-year-old -- but it should be earned!

Why a piercing but not a tattoo? Because a child can simply remove the ring or stud if she does not want to wear it anymore. But a tattoo is permanent. If a child wants a tattoo, she can get one when she turns 18.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:49AM (-08:00)

## Can children outgrow ADHD?

Sunday, February 22, 2009

Mark,

My daughter was put on Adderall in the 5th grade. She is now in the 10th grade and is not taking it. I took her off about 1 month ago because I did not think it was helping her. Her grades are good and I have seen no change in her. How do you explain this?? Can they outgrow ADHD?

.....

We used to think children would "grow out" of ADHD. We now know that is not true for most children. Symptoms of ADHD often get better as children grow older and learn to

adjust. Hyperactivity usually stops in the late teenage years. But about half of children who have ADHD continue to be easily distracted, have mood swings, hot tempers and are unable to complete tasks. Children who have loving, supportive parents who work together with school staff, mental health workers and their doctor have the best chance of becoming well-adjusted adults.

Until the early 1990s, the medical community considered ADHD a “childhood disorder.” Believing that children “outgrew” the condition, physicians routinely took them off medication before high school. In many cases, however, the teens struggled socially and academically, making it clear that ADHD symptoms had not gone away. And, as greater efforts were made to educate parents about ADHD, more and more of them, like Aidan’s mother, began to recognize their own ADHD symptoms.

Clinically, we have seen that some individuals do show enough improvement after puberty that they no longer need medication. But the American Academy of Family Physicians reports that two-thirds of children with ADHD continue to grapple with the condition throughout adulthood.

I advise taking children and adolescents off medication once a year. If the symptoms of hyperactivity, inattention, and/or impulsivity are no longer noticeable, they stay off. Should these behaviors return, medication should be re-started. This process teaches adolescents about the challenges ADHD presents in their lives, and how to determine for themselves whether medication is needed in school, at home, with friends, and so on. Medication should be used whenever symptoms interfere with the demands and expectations of a specific task or activity. It is not necessarily needed all day, every day.

For example, a college student may learn that she benefits from an eight-hour capsule to cover morning and afternoon classes, but can be off medication while she relaxes, exercises, or socializes later in the day. On evenings when she needs to study, she can take a four-hour tablet at about 6 p.m. An adult may find that he needs medication at work but not at home, or for some social functions, but not others.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:16PM (-08:00)

## Re: Poor self-esteem is teenage girls...

Sunday, February 22, 2009

Mark:

My daughter is 14 years old. She has always been difficult, but it is escalating to new levels. She has on several occasions pretended to be someone else – the first time was really big when she had a website as her handsome supposed cousin “Jake” and managed to fool almost everyone at school. When she was discovered a few months later, she was ostracized by a large part of the student body that was embarrassed by her charade. You would think she would learn!

Coincidentally, we moved out of state a few months later, and she has started texting people from school as “other people”. She has also continued to text people from her old school saying she is someone else too. Some of these “alter egos” are real people and some are made up. I have had a series of consequences (taking away electronics etc)

yet it seems to have no impact whatsoever. Even the natural consequences (her lack of friends, the embarrassment etc) have had no effect. She truly dislikes herself, which is one of the reasons she pretends to be someone else.

So this week hit a new low. I got a call from my daughter this morning hysterical crying, asking me to get her from school. She then texted me and told me she had pretended to be someone else, took intimate pictures of herself and sent them to this guy at school. He figured out it was her, and started showing them around school. So then the principal called and told me the same story and that he had taken the boys' cell phone away. I had the school take my daughter's too, which I picked up from them. I am going to meet my daughter after school today, take away her phone, internet access etc., but I really don't think it will do anything long term. Being shunned by her peers didn't even help! The principal was perplexed, as we live in a small town now and he said they had never run into this (and didn't think it was within the jurisdiction of the school anyway). I have read articles about how this could be considered child porn, so in a way I am glad for that.

She has recently started therapy (again), but it is really early on. Her school grades have hit an all time low and everything is just falling apart. Any advice would be appreciated. I really need some guidance of what would be appropriate to do at this point.

Thanks.

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Your daughter is receiving a series of natural consequences – so you should not add your own consequence to the mix.

Counseling may not yield much bang for your buck. These things (i.e., attention seeking behaviors) usually pass with time anyway.

Self-esteem is related to how confident we feel about our talents and abilities. Consider the following in order to understand the internal and external pressures girls feel and how these pressures affect the development of their self-esteem:

- Eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression are the most common mental health problems in girls.
- 59% of 5–12th grade girls in one survey were dissatisfied with their body shape.
- 20–40% of girls begin dieting at age 10.
- By 15, girls are twice as likely to become depressed than boys.
- Among 5–12th graders, 47% said they wanted to lose weight because of magazine pictures.
- Health risks accompany girls' drop in self-esteem due to risky eating habits, depression, and unwanted pregnancy.
- Girls aged 10 and 12 (tweens) are confronted with "teen" issues such as dating and sex, at increasingly earlier ages. 73% of 8–12-year olds dress like teens and talk like teens.

When and why does girls' self-esteem drop?

- Starting in the pre-teen years, there is a shift in focus; the body becomes an all-consuming passion and barometer of worth.
- Self-esteem becomes too closely tied to physical attributes; girls feel they can't measure up to society standards.
- Between 5th and 9th grade, gifted girls, perceiving that smarts aren't sexy, hide their accomplishments.
- Teenage girls encounter more "stressors" in life, especially in their personal relationships, and react more strongly than boys to these pressures, which accounts in part for the higher levels of depression in girls.
- The media, including television, movies, videos, lyrics, magazine, internet, and advertisements, portray images of girls and women in a sexual manner—revealing clothing, body posture and facial expressions—as models of femininity for girls to emulate.

The sexualization of girls and mental health problems—

In response to reports by journalists, child advocacy organizations, parents, and psychologists, in 2007 the American Psychological Association (APA) created a Task Force to consider these issues. The Task Force Report concluded that the sexualization of girls is a broad and increasing problem and is harmful to girls' self-image and healthy development. Sexualization is defined as occurring when a person's value comes only from her/his sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics, and when a person is sexually objectified, e.g., made into a thing for another's sexual use. The report states that examples of sexualization are found in all forms of media, and as 'new media' have been created and access to media has become omnipresent, examples have increased.

The APA Task Force Report states that sexualization has negative effects in a variety of domains:

- Cognitive and emotional health: Sexualization and objectification undermine a person's confidence in and comfort with her own body, leading to emotional and self-image problems, such as shame and anxiety.
- Mental and physical health: Research links sexualization with three of the most common mental health problems diagnosed in girls and women—eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed mood.
- Sexual development: Research suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences on girls' ability to develop a healthy sexual self-image.

How can parents help their daughters develop healthy self-esteem?

Although the media, peers, and pop culture influence children, parents still hold more sway than they think when it comes to having an impact on a daughter's developing self-esteem. Here's how parents can help:

- Monitor your own comments about your self and your daughter.
- Get dads involved. Girls with active, hardworking dads attend college more often and are more ambitious, more successful in school, more likely to attain careers of their own, less dependent, more self-protective, and less likely to date an abusive man.

- Watch your own stereotypes; let daughters help fix the kitchen sink and let sons help make dinner.
- Encourage your daughter to speak her mind.
- Let girls fail - which requires letting them try. Helping them all the time or protecting them, especially if done by dad, can translate into a girl feeling incapable or incompetent.
- Don't limit girls' choices, let them try math, buy them a chemistry kit. Interest, not just expertise, should be motivation enough.
- Get girls involved with sports/physical activity, it can reduce their risk of chronic diseases. Female athletes do better academically and have lower school drop-out rates than non-athletes. Regular physical activity can enhance girls' mental health, reduce symptoms of stress and depression, make them feel strong and competent.
- Watch television, movies, and other media with your daughters and sons. Discuss how images of girls are portrayed.
- Counteract advertisers who take advantage of the typical anxieties and self-doubts of pre-teen and teenage girls by making them feel they need their product to feel "cool." To sensitize them to this trend and to highlight the effect that ads can have on people, discuss the following questions (adapted from the Media Awareness Network) with children:
  1. Do you ever feel bad about yourself for not owning something?
  2. Have you ever felt that people might like you more if you owned a certain item?
  3. Has an ad make you feel that you would like yourself more, or that others would like you more if you owned the product the ad is selling?
  4. Do you worry about your looks? Have you ever felt that people would like you more if your face, body, skin or hair looked different?
  5. Has an ad ever made you feel that you would like yourself more, or others would like you more, if you changed your appearance with the product the ad was selling?

It is within the family that a girl first develops a sense of who she is and who she wants to become. Parents armed with knowledge can create a psychological climate that will enable each girl to achieve her full potential. Parents can help their daughters avoid developing, or overcome, negative feelings about themselves and grow into strong, self-confident women.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:39PM (-08:00)

## I'm still concerned about leaving him here while we're gone...

Monday, February 23, 2009

Hello Mark,

First, thank you for your calm and sensible way of dealing with these problems. We have

appreciated the help.

We have a dilemma. Spring break is coming and a trip has been planned. Our 18 year old son, for whom we started your program doesn't want to go. He would like to go on an alternate trip with a friend and his family, which would only be for part of the time we will be gone and just staying around town at home or with other friends the rest of the time.

One of the reasons we started your program was a little incident earlier in the year when we found he had a party with alcohol in the house when we were out of town. We tried to get him to talk to us about what he thought would be an appropriate punishment but when he didn't come up with anything on his own we came up with some restrictions he of course didn't agree with. He did stick to it pretty well with only a few changes that we discussed prior to the events. Another was his lack of motivation and sort of a passive aggressive way of dealing with us and blowing off chores and school. He's had a few angry outbursts but nothing violent towards us, he does have a punching bag that has gotten a workout on a couple of occasions.

Since starting your program things have improved but I'm still concerned about leaving him here while we're gone.

I thought about getting him to write an itinerary of where he would be each day with phone numbers of the homes he would be staying in so we could call there each evening and make sure he was actually in those places. The other idea was to write up a contract of what was expected of him while we were gone.

I'm feeling apprehensive but would really like to trust him to do the right thing. He will be going off to college next year so it would be great for him to show more maturity at this point.

If you could help in any way we would really appreciate it.

Thank You,

A.

.....

Here are a few questions to think about:

- Can your son understand and follow safety measures?
- Does your son follow your instructions about staying away from strangers?
- Does your son know basic first-aid procedures?
- Does your son make good judgments about what kinds of risks to take?
- Does your son show signs of responsibility with things like homework, household chores, and following directions?
- Does your son understand and follow rules?
- How does your son handle unexpected situations?
- How calm does your son stay when things don't go his way?

Even if you're confident that your son does well with all of the above, it's wise to make some practice runs, or home-alone trials, before the big day. Let your son stay home alone for 30 minutes to an hour while you remain nearby and easily reachable. When you



return, discuss how it went and talk about things that you might want to change or skills that your son may need to learn for the next time.

Even after you decide that your son is ready to stay home alone, you're bound to feel a little anxious when the time comes. But some practical steps taken in advance can make it easier for you both:

- Schedule time to get in touch. Set up a schedule for calling. You might have your son call as soon as he walks in the door (if coming home to an empty house), or set up a time when you'll call home to check in. Figure out something that's convenient for both of you. Make sure your son understands when you'll be able to get in touch and when you might not be able to answer a call.

- Set ground rules. Try to set up some special rules for when you're away and make sure that your son knows and understands them. Consider rules about:

- o answering the phone
- o getting along with siblings
- o having a friend or friends over while you're not there
- o Internet and computer rules
- o kitchen and cooking (you may want to make the oven and utensils like sharp knives off limits)
- o not telling anyone he is alone
- o opening the door for strangers
- o rooms of the house that are off limits, especially with friends
- o TV time and types of shows

- Childproof your home. No matter how well your son follows rules, be sure to secure anything that could be a health or safety risk. Lock them up and put them in a place where your son cannot get to them or, when possible, remove them from your home. These items include:

- o alcohol
- o car keys
- o guns (if you do keep one, make sure it is locked up and leave it unloaded and stored away from ammunition)
- o lighters and matches
- o over-the-counter medications that could cause problems if taken in excess: sleeping pills, cough medicine, etc.
- o prescription medications
- o tobacco

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:17AM (-08:00)

# Daughter is angry at me most of the time...

Monday, February 23, 2009

My 13 year old daughter is angry at me most of the time. It is hard to say anything to her without her snarkyness "don't talk to me" or "I know" ect. I never know if I should let it pass or jump on it. Then later she will ask rather nicely if she can go to a friends. Do I say "no" now because of the earlier rudeness that I endured BUT did not act on at the time? Week 2 is hard. So many issues and hard to pick where and what battles to tackle in the heap.

Also, her 16year old sister is so "good". This builds a lot of resentment with my 13year old. She wonders why all these rules only seem to apply to her. She always says we favor her sister. Her sister does what she is suppose to without problem. She is pleasant and works hard at school. I don't know what to say to my 13 year old about why only she had to have all these extra chores and rules.

.....

Teen anger takes many forms. It may be expressed as indignation and resentment, or rage and fury. It is the expression of teenage anger, the behavior that we see. Some teens may repress their anger and withdraw; others may be more defiant and destroy property. They will continue their behavior, or it may escalate, until they decide to look within themselves to the roots of their anger. But teenage anger is a feeling, an emotion, not a behavior. And anger is usually caused by something going on in a teen's life.

Teen anger can be a frightening emotion for the teen and for the parents, but it is not inherently harmful. Its negative expressions can include physical and verbal violence, prejudice, malicious gossip, antisocial behavior, sarcasm, addictions, withdrawal, and psychosomatic disorders. These negative expressions of teenage anger can devastate lives, destroying relationships, harming others, disrupting work, clouding effective thinking, affecting physical health, and ruining futures.

But, there is a positive aspect to such expression, as it can show others that a problem exists. Teenage anger is usually a secondary emotion brought on by fear. It can motivate us to resolve those things that are not working in our lives and help us face our issues and deal with the underlying reasons for the anger, specifically things such as:

- Abuse
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Grief
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Trauma

Teens face a lot of emotional issues during this period of development. They're faced with questions of identity, separation, relationships, and purpose. The relationship between teens and their parents is also changing as teens become more and more independent. Parents often have a difficult time dealing with their teen's new-found independence. And it can bring up issues of the parents' own anger.

This can bring about frustration and confusion that can lead to anger and a pattern of

reactive behavior for both parents and teens. That is, teens are simply negatively reacting to their parent's behaviors, and parents react back in an equally negative manner.

This sets up a self-reinforcing pattern of interaction. Unless we work to change our own behavior, we cannot help another change theirs. We need to respond rather than react to each other and to situations. The intention is not to deny the anger, but to control that emotion and find a way to express it in a productive or at least, a less harmful, manner.

Teens dealing with anger can ask these questions of themselves to help bring about greater self-awareness:

- Where does this anger come from?
- What situations bring out this feeling of anger?
- Do my thoughts begin with absolutes such as "must," "should," "never?"
- Are my expectations unreasonable?
- What unresolved conflict am I facing?
- Am I reacting to hurt, loss, or fear?
- Am I aware of anger's physical signals? (e.g., clenching fists, shortness of breath, sweating)
- How do I choose to express my anger?
- To whom or what is my anger directed?
- Am I using anger as a way to isolate myself, or as a way to intimidate others?
- Am I communicating effectively?
- Am I focusing on what has been done to me rather than what I can do?
- How am I accountable for what I'm feeling?
- How am I accountable for how my anger shows up?
- Do my emotions control me, or do I control my emotions?

So what can teens and parents do? Listen to your teen and focus on feelings. Try to understand the situation from his or her perspective. Blaming and accusing only builds up more walls and ends all communication. Tell them how you feel, stick to facts, and deal with the present moment.

Show that you care and show your love. Work towards a solution where everyone gets something, and therefore feels okay about the resolution. Remember that anger is the feeling and behavior is the choice.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:40AM (-08:00)

## HE WANTS TO CALL HIS GRANDMOTHER TO WHINE AND COMPLAIN...

Thursday, February 26, 2009

I AM NEW TO YOUR PROGRAM AND I DO HAVE A SITUATION I DIDN'T SEE ON YOUR SITE. I HAVE 6 KIDS, TWO OF WHICH ARE STEPSONS. THE OLDEST OF THE TWO IS THE ONE I AM HAVING ISSUES WITH. MY HUSBAND WORKS OFFSHORE AND IS GONE A LOT, SO I AM ON MY OWN A LOT OF THE TIME.

THE PROBLEM I KEEP ENCOUNTERING IS WHEN THE STEPSON GETS INTO TROUBLE OR IS NOT HAPPY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING HE WANTS TO CALL HIS GRANDMOTHER (MY MOTHER-IN-LAW) TO WHINE AND COMPLAIN TO HER.

SHE ALWAYS TRIES TO CONTROL WHAT GOES ON IN MY HOME AND HAS EVEN GONE TO HIS SCHOOL TO TALK TO HIS TEACHERS, COUNSELORS AND SO ON.

I REALLY HAVE REACHED THE END OF MY ROPE WITH THIS ISSUE AND FEEL LIKE I CAN'T EVEN DISCIPLINE HIM FOR FEAR OF WHAT SHE MIGHT DO OR SAY.

ANY ADVICE?

HOPELESS IN LOUISIANA,

K.

.....

There is a thin line between being interfering and being helpful, and a child's grandparents seem to be constantly crossing that line.

When a child is born, the child's grandparents can be a great source of help, support and encouragement. Grandparents almost always know what to do when their grandchild child is unwell, not eating, not burping, not sleeping, crying too much, sneezing, hiccupping.... and so on. In fact, many women would call their mothers or mothers-in-law before calling their husbands, for advice regarding health issues. But when it comes to advice regarding child rearing, it suddenly seems as though grandparents have it all wrong.

There is a thin line between being interfering and being helpful, and a child's grandparents, (especially if they are your in-laws!) seem to be constantly crossing that line.

If you discuss your child's behavioural aspects with his grandparents, be prepared for advice. If you don't want to hear advice, then don't discuss their problems with them. It would be unfair on your part if you unburden your worries on them, and then when they offer solutions, argue with them about why what they are saying doesn't make sense.

Be prepared to heed some advice. Don't be completely closed to their inputs. After all, they did bring up your spouse, didn't they? And how wrong did they go? If you love your spouse and if he turned out to be a sensible, balanced and nice person, it makes sense for you to at least give their ideas a fair hearing even if such ideas oppose yours. It is always better to have an open mind with regard to child rearing since everything is so subjective.

It is true that you can bring up your child the way you feel is right, but in your strong desire to do this, don't discount good tips. Many mothers, feeling threatened by constant interference from in-laws, make it a point not to heed their advice. This is completely understandable, as it is just a defensive reaction. Instead, if you have a problem with your child's grandparent's interference, discuss it with them. Let them know that you feel a

certain way on certain issues, and that you would welcome their suggestions on other matters or when you ask for them.

It is all too easy for parents to criticize in-laws for interfering, but not all understand the emotion behind such interference. True, many in-laws are unnecessarily dominating, but irrespective, if you feel that their ideas do not completely go against your beliefs, you could perhaps give in to them every once in a while to maintain peace, especially if you are living together. Don't refuse to listen to them because you know that your husband is on your side or because you know that you have enough freedom and really can do whatever you want. Instead of simply turning a blind eye to what grandparents feel, discuss it with them and let them know why you feel strongly about doing things in another manner.

Always remember that grandparents nowadays have valuable experience, and make for the best baby sitters. These days, with people staying healthier in their old age, grandparents can participate in various activities with their children. They can tell them stories of the days gone by, inculcate in children a sense of family pride, and increase a child's knowledge about his culture and heritage. In addition, they love your child more than any aayah would. So bear this in mind the next time you are tempted to snap at them for interfering. It is for your own peace of mind.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:51AM (-08:00)

## Out Of Control Teen on Probation

Sunday, March 01, 2009

Hi L.,

**I've responded throughout your email below:**

Hello, We are using your instruction for our out of control teen. We have a 16 yr old son, who over the last year (on & off) has been drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana

**Please refer to "Read These Emails From Exasperated Parents" [session #4 - online version of eBook] for recommendations on pot and alcohol.**

and hanging out with the wrong group of kids.

**Please refer to "Hangin' with the wrong crowd..." below for recommendations on negative peer influence:**

click==> <http://www.onlineparentingcoach.com/2008/09/hangin-with-wrong-crowd.html>

He was arrested for possession of drug paraphernalia in his car (misdemeanor in Idaho) and a positive urine for marijuana on 2/6. This is his first encounter with the law but not with his parents. We meet with the probation officer next week to discuss sentencing. My question to you is should we ask for him to spend time in juvenile detention (a weekend) to get a taste of what could become if he continues down this path, or is that something we should leave for the probation officer to hold over his head while on probation.

**Fear-based motivation has no longevity. And most out-of-control teens are not intimidated by the prospect of detention. In fact, a tour or visit will actually increase the intrigue.**

It is not the norm to send them to JD on the first offence unless the parents request it.

**No. And the PO will not detain because you requested it.**

He will also get counseling for anger management, family communication, drug and alcohol class, community service, probation for 6 month, monthly drug testing, & evaluation for depression. I want to approach him with tough love but a counselor told us we could also go to far in the discipline process. What are your thoughts?

**If you follow the program, you will not be "going to far."**

**I must say that you will benefit from going back through the online version of the eBook a second time. You have asked me questions that are already addressed there, which tells me you have missed some important pieces.**

**Mark**

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:22PM (-08:00)

## He did not come home...

Sunday, March 01, 2009

Hi Mark, we have been implementing your program since Jan 1st. I have done everything by the book and consistently as possible. I have taken it slow and worked one session a month. Maybe too slow. Implementing session 3 now. My son's rages have decreased to at least no more physical violence so far and have been further between incidents. However this last blow up started on the 26th ( with the grounding/ no cell) and he had made so many infractions of the discipline ( computer and TV were then taken away) that by the 28th he had flown into a rage, punched knuckle marks in my steel door, broke my cordless phone because I wouldn't let him use it and tore up "The Rules" off the frig and spit on them on my dining room floor. What set him off was his Grandmother stopping over and giving him a little lecture about his disrespectful language towards me (her daughter). Well he blew up and feels that his transgressions are between him and I only. I may not talk to his father or anyone for that matter about "his business" per him. I told him that I cannot control what his Grandmother or Father does. I told the truth and if he

didn't like the truth then maybe he should change it. Because he is the only one who can. I need someone to vent to and I had no idea that his father or Grandmother would bring up the subject. Is his request reasonable? I am so confused. He got so violent that I called 911( first time ever and the real reason he took off so fast) because I also have 2 daughters 13 and 15 and he could (and has) gotten physically violent with them. I feel sorry for the girls having to live like this. Well he took off walking which is what he is supposed to do when he feels this way. I have had to use the broken record technique and tell him I will not argue and please take a walk. This time though he did not come home and I still do not know where he is almost 19 hours later. His phone was shut off on thursday. So here I sit with a broken TV tray in my living room, paper and spit on my dining room floor and a broken cordless in the hallway. Waiting for him to come home. Not a good feeling. I do not know if I want him to come home. Will he be repentant and where do I start the discipline again. I have written several "to deal with later things". Our rules are simple- no swearing, no violence, do homework, do chores. Then the rest of the day is yours. That leaves about 8 hours after he gets out of school. Time enough I think and he still has teachers e-mailing me about missing assignments and bad grades. The privacy thing though has me stumped. Any suggestions?

Thanks, D.

.....

Hi D.,

Please refer to "When You Want Something From Your Kid" [session #3 - online version of eBook] under "Ask The Parent Coach" [right hand column].

Other things to consider when your son returns home include the following:

- Be happy that your child is back home. Many teens fear the initial meeting with their parents. Remain calm. Express relief and tell your child you love him/her and that together you will solve any problems
- Make follow-up phone calls. Let all your contacts, including the police, know your child has returned home. Police may need to speak or meet with your child.
- Allow time to settle in. Your child may need a shower, a meal, clean clothes, or sleep.
- Get medical attention. Visit your family doctor to address any medical concerns.
- Talk with your teen. Discuss how you can work together to prevent him/her from leaving again. Acknowledge some problems take time and effort to solve. Be sure you resolve the problems safely and reasonably.
- Look for assistance and support. People and organizations in your community can help counsel your family. Asking for help is a sign of strength and shows you are taking the issue seriously.

Good Luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:50PM (-08:00)

## He was quite humbled and apologized to us all after the policeman t...

Tuesday, March 03, 2009

Thanks for your reply Mark. My kids do not do well with change and we have implemented up to and including everything in session 3 and am starting session 4. One week of each was going too fast for them and then tend to think I won't continue to be consistent if I try to do too much changing at once. You know they think "oh she'll forget about it next week" so I've had to go slower. However my children are doing much better at communicating their needs and finding alternatives to hand outs and freebies from me. My son has a deep seated resentment towards his alcoholic father and until he deals with that (if he ever does) he will never "drop the rock" of his anger completely. However it does not justify the rage. He was quite humbled and apologized to us all after the policeman talked to him. I hope he takes it as a second chance. Because the NEXT time he is going away, one way or the other. I will continue to refine as I go along. I realize it's a process and I do see some growth in my children's own self-reliance. That is really my goal here. To undo the over indulging I've done and equip them to be able to handle life on life's terms when they leave home.

Thanks so much and I'll keep you posted,

D.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:15AM (-08:00)

## I know that there are a lot of rubbish being sold on the internet...

Friday, March 06, 2009

Dear Mark,

Having been inspired by yourself I decided to take the plunge and write my own book on successful modern parenting. The book itself is quite substantial and includes topics which I hope will answer many parenting concerns. It also covers a broad spectrum of parenting issues, i.e., your child's health, mental and physical development, single parenting and education to name but a few.

I have spent the last 4 months researching and writing this book. I want to ensure that I only provide parents with quality information. I highly respect your views and opinions as I know you're an expert in this field. This is why I was hoping you could review my product as I value any feedback you may have on it. From my own personal experience, I know that there are a lot of rubbish being sold on the internet. I want to provide a book which I believe will be good value for money.



and I am yet to arrange everything accordingly, however in regards to the writing material it is complete. I would change everything if you believed that it was necessary to do so.

Thank you ever so much and I'll look forward to hearing back from you.

Warm regards,

Gareth Williams

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:44AM (-08:00)

## What do you do if your child is expelled for the rest of the year...

Friday, March 06, 2009

What do you do if your child is expelled for the rest of the year ...what activities should he do besides giving chores and groundings ...how does he get educated in the meantime?

.....

This is a real hot topic: what to do with kids who are expelled. Unfortunately, short of home schooling or alternative school – not much can be done given the current system that pervades most U.S. schools.

The debate seems to go as follows:

Reasons To Agree With Expulsion—

I don't believe school is the right place for many of these students. children without these massive problems have a right to learn, and are often harmed by the violent and disruptive behaviour of these students. We need to protect other students and still having them onsite does not do this. But more places are needed which cater for these kids, throwing them out is not to answer. But a non school based place is needed.

I believe school is there for learning and if the student is intent on disruption then it is Not the place for them. Expelling is fine by me as ultimately the parents have a responsibility to do something for the failing child by seeking external help. The school teacher has 20 or 25 others to teach and this should be the teachers role - disruptive / bad behaved kids should be expelled. There are counsellors/private tuition/psychologists in the community where the difficult pupil can get help.

Education is a privilege, treat it as such, unruly and badly behaved children affect all other children at the school. They should be removed. If you are worried about denying them an education, why dont you change their perception of its value

Cause and effect.

Children with extreme "special needs" should be channelled OUT of schools into an appropriate environment where they will not impede the learning of more fortunate

children.

Schools should be allowed to expel students. At work if you are repeatedly late or show up drunk or stoned etc then you'd get fired! Instant dismissal in my job... why not school... why should teachers waste their time teaching people who don't want to learn.

#### Reasons To Disagree With Expulsion—

I don't think we should be able to expel students. Shunting them out of the school system or onto other schools passes the buck and does not examine or deal with the problems the student has. Difficult children have their reasons (whether they know it or not). Sometimes the fault lies with the school and not the child at all. Sometimes it is the child's family. I was a difficult child myself once, but went on to get several degrees and post-graduate degrees. I KNOW the importance of having faith that difficult children can grow up to be interesting, contributing adults.

Outside of the main cities, many towns do not have a second high school within a 15 minute drive. What are you to do with the expelled students, send them to another school who doesn't want them either? or just forget about them completely? Schools in many towns are the only local government institution. If you expel a child, then the government and society is giving up their responsibility for that child. No wonder expelled children end up unemployed and in jail within a few years. Society needs to fix the problems it has, it's cheaper to deal with it earlier than building more prisons.

I think they need to look at things the student is struggling to do and work around them it is known that we all learn differently and have different interests, some things shouldn't be compulsory.

Naughty kids need an education too, it will help them become a meaningful part of their community one day.

#### Reasons for Remain Neutral—

No child left behind means all children fall behind. If individuals choose not to engage in the school system, then they should choose another school (changes required) or go to a special school that suits their interests. The problem here is mandating that students attend the school that is most convenient for the government to fund.

Here's an email from parents whose child was expelled:

Our story is posted on this blog to open the eyes of the community of what is going on in our schools. We have experienced what school expulsion has done to our family. As parents, you hurt when your child hurts. You want to protect your child. You teach them respect for authority. You teach them right from wrong. To know the loss he has experienced over this is unimaginable unless you have been through it yourself. To know that the school that you had so much faith and pride in turned their back to you and essentially fired you for doing what you believed was the right thing is devastating. There is no compensation for that. We have felt the support of relatives, friends, co-workers and even our son's teacher. Those who know our son know he didn't do this. What we don't know is why he is going through this? Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

As we have been on this journey we wondered if there have been any studies done on the students that have been through expulsions. What happens to these students that are expelled? Indiana unlike other states does not offer alternative schools for expelled kids. Kids that are at high risk may lose the only structured environment they have. Students feel more frustrated when isolated from others and gradually develop a sense of hostility towards the society, because to be expelled means a situation of being abandoned and segregated. Expulsion removes students from school and reduces their instruction and learning time. Additionally, it forces the student to have to catch up on missing work, and this is very difficult to do when a student has missed more than a few days of school. Naturally, expulsion disrupts the learning process. According to the Commission for Positive Change of Oakland, California, students who are expelled are more likely to suffer from lowered sense of self-esteem, feelings of being unwanted at school, and alienation from peers, which results in a higher chance of receiving failing grades because many times, and expulsions on records hurt the student's ability to get a job or get into college, which may increase the risk of juvenile delinquency among these students. Altogether, these factors contribute to a much higher chance that the expelled student will drop out of school entirely, or will be pushed out of school. How does this help the student? Well, it doesn't. A senior high school principal in Oakland, California says of expulsions, "There are no benefits to the kids. They get nothing. It's for the school. Suspension is a short-term release valve for the school. Imagine what may happen if a student with special needs gets expelled. Students with disabilities, especially if it is a learning or behavior disability, need extra time and need to put in extra effort to do there work as it is, and if they are expelled, then all of the above factors can be multiplied and will only hurt the student even more.

We have posted before on the expulsion and suspension rates in our local communities. (April- Southern Indiana Schools) The numbers for some schools are surprising. Is this what we want for our children?

#### Expulsion Percentages

Floyd Central High School - 0.3%  
New Albany High School - 0.9%  
Jeffersonville High School - 1.9%  
East Washington High School - 2.8%  
West Washington High School - 0%  
Salem High School - 0.9%

#### Suspension Rates

Floyd Central High School - 6.4%  
New Albany High School - 15.3%  
Jeffersonville High School 19.4%  
East Washington High School 9.1%  
West Washington High School 7.6%  
Salem High School 8.1%

What are your thoughts?

Email: [mbhutten@gmail.com](mailto:mbhutten@gmail.com)

Your comments will be posted on this blog.

Mark Hutten, M.A.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:38AM (-08:00)

## Should I give in...?

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Hi Mark

Need quick help with a situation. My son is 17 and has been pushing at all our rules and boundaries. We have settled into a situation where we allow him to stay out overnight, just so long as he is always back by a certain time at college nights ready to go to college next morning.

Last night when he had missed the deadline by half an hour, we called him and he said he had no intention of coming back or going to college the next day. We said if you choose not to then you choose the consequence, which was his phone being switched off remotely at the service provider. He insisted he had more important things to do. I switched his phone off.

This morning I checked his room and found he had come back (about an hour and a half late). It was time to get up for college and when I told him I needed him to get up he swore at me and told me he wasn't going to college. He was extremely disrespectful. However he eventually got up and went to college, but I told him that because he had chosen to miss the deadline to come back and been disrespectful to us his phone was still off for three days. I then emphasised that if he chose to repeat this behaviour the three days would reset and start again.

When he came back from college he apologised and asked for his phone to be turned back on. I felt we should stick to the three days, but his point was he did go after all so he had done nothing wrong (apart from all the rude disrespect and missing the agreed deadline).

He then began yelling and threatening again and saying he would buy his own phone so we can't turn this one off etc. I wondered if we had missed a stage - I had warned him of the behaviour and told him to 'respect' our limits, but I hadn't specifically defined that a lot of grief and swearing counts as disrespect enough to turn the phone off for three days even if he does then choose to go eventually. I wondered should I give in and turn the phone back on this once, but make it clear that if he chose this form of disrespect in future it would also qualify for the full consequence?

Or should I absolutely under no circumstances compromise the three day condition? Even if he then finds a way of getting a new phone that I can't touch? (I can't just 'steal' his phone - he would get physically aggressive if I tried).

Cheers

M.

.....  
Hi,

He missed the deadline, which was articulated to him from the very beginning as evidence by your statement: "We have settled into a situation where we allow him to stay out overnight, just so long as he is always back by a certain time at college nights ready to go to college next morning." Thus, you should stick to the original time line of 3 days. Plus, it would be a good idea for him to get his own phone.

When undecided about what course of action to take, ask yourself is the decision I am about to make going to foster dependency or self-reliance? If the outcome is likely to cultivate self-reliance in your son, then it is a good decision. Paying for his own phone would be a movement toward self-reliance.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:57PM (-07:00)

## I have already received more for my money than the year of counsel...

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

I signed up last night. I am glad I did. I have already learned that my parenting style is not what I thought it was and I am looking forward to learning new techniques.

I have already referred this program to two other families, at this point, I have already received more for my money than the year of counseling sessions we attended.

Thank you and God Bless!

S.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:38AM (-07:00)

## Should I stick to the harsh consequence...

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Hi Mark,

Firstly I want to say how impressed I am with your ebook and online session training. I have been referring them both far and wide to other desperate friends, since I purchased them. If you ever want to work with someone to make it more country specific to Australia (including website design), and/or undertake business development here, I would be most interested.

Anyway, I am writing for your help. B\_\_ has been spirited from birth. From a young baby

and throughout childhood a total whinger (that is harsh but the truth), along the way getting up many people's noses and in particular teachers. She can equally be very funny and a great companion. She hates being alone. In addition to having an elder sister by two years she is a brother 8 years younger who suffers from a health issue.

In her early teens, when her elder sister (the quiet one) was having some issues she seemed to change and become more mature and reliable. When her sister came good after about two years she began acting out again.

At 14 years she got caught for truanting with a friend by school and in order to avoid punishment she disappeared overnight with friend (she goes to a private school and it caused a real flap).

At 15 she was caught shoplifting (with same girl) but got off with warning if nothing else happens in 5 years.

Throughout that year constantly backchatting and in trouble with teachers. With friends would leave house in middle of night to meet friends. If you say no all hell breaks loose, she yells, swears, threatens. On the other hand definitely no drugs, only a little alcohol, no smoking, will generally meet curfew, no getting in cars.

She is exceptionally bright but inordinately lazy. Has not got a passion in life except to look good, wear makeup, go to parties. We've tried to encourage her to find something she loves (made worse by the fact that her sister is an exceptional artist).

Recently there has been some improvement. Only a little alcohol, not much, has very nice boyfriend who we all like a lot. Not in trouble too much at school except for talking too much. But can't tolerate no. Is unreliable (lost good job because of), won't do chores unless extreme duress wants lots of stuff (not that she gets it). Can lay a guilt trip as good as the very best.

I am applying your program and have felt confident until today.

Today, she wanted to wear expensive item of mine to school for free dress day (why do they have them??). I said no because it was inappropriate and too good for school. All hell broke loose, yelling, swearing (my husband and I tried to keep down our own intensity and perhaps only 60% successful). I warned if she did not get over it and get to school she would not go to her boyfriend's birthday dinner tomorrow night (a big shame). She couldn't get it together and missed being dropped at bus station with me but took off whilst I was away and I thought to school by her own means. Later I find she has come home but then heads off to school around 10.30am and arrives there after missing three periods.

I'm unsure. Should I stick to the harsh consequence (ie. missing boyfriend's birthday dinner which punishes him to) when she did calm down and make a decision to get to school, albeit missing three periods? Or, should I offer her a choice of consequences such as... she can miss the dinner or lose her mobile phone for three days? I don't feel I am good at identifying what things to let slip by as opposed to what to really stick to.

Sorry for novel!

Regards

B.

.....  
Hi B.,

*Re: Should I stick to the harsh consequence (ie. missing boyfriends birthday dinner which punishes him to) when she did calm down and make a decision to get to school, albeit missing three periods?*

One of our golden rules is to never retract (or water-down) a consequence once it has been issued. To do so will send a very clear message that "mom's bark is all bark -- no bite." Thus, the next time something similar happens, she will know that your words are fairly meaningless.

Mark

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:15AM (-07:00)

## No Double Dipping !

Monday, March 23, 2009

Hi Mark,

First of all let me say, this program is awesome! I was desperate on what to do with my 16 year old daughter and I googled something (can't even remember what) and your website showed up at the top of my search. I only wish I would have found something like this years ago! My husband and I are starting week 3 of the program. I'm a bit overwhelmed with it all, but we have been trying to follow through with the assignments. What a difference staying calm makes!

Anyway, I have many questions but I am going to start with just one.

My daughter has been getting in trouble at school. In the past she has been grounded from going anywhere for detentions. Today I learned she received a two day "in-school" suspension for her third offense of disrupting class. What would you suggest as a discipline? Do I start with the one day discipline or go straight to a 3 day discipline since the one day would be less punishment than she has gotten in the past. Also, she doesn't go anywhere during the school week, so a three day discipline with no priviledges during the week and then allowing her to go to her friends this weekend does not seem strong enough. I would rather start the 3 day discipline on Friday. What are your thoughts?

Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

A.  
.....

Hi A.,

NO DOUBLE DIPPING !

A double-dip consequence is a consequence one step removed—a consequence applied because the parent is upset that a child has done something away from home that required somebody else to apply discipline. Double-dip consequences are very common, but highly inappropriate. An extreme example: A child is spanked for “earning” (and getting) a spanking from somebody else: unjust, unfair, and punitive.

Here are some examples of double-dip consequences:

- Disciplining your child because he was disciplined at school. You can and should talk about what happened, chat about the child's feelings (and your own), and brainstorm ways of avoiding similar situations in the future.
- Natural consequences often lend themselves to double-dipping. Be wary! People have a tendency to scold or discipline a child for letting a natural consequence occur. If Maurice's favorite toy breaks because he threw it against the wall, it's double-dipping (and inappropriate) for you to scold and berate him for breaking it. He will learn more from the natural consequence if you simply talk with him in a kind, firm way about what happened, how he (and you) feels, and how to avoid the situation in the future.

Mark

.....

Wow, I never thought of that before. I must admit it made me uncomfortable not to give her a punishment. My husband was not happy about it at all and was afraid that she wouldn't learn anything if we didn't give her any punishment. I gently reminded him that we have punished in the past for the detentions and it still didn't keep her from repeating the offense. So, we have decided to trust your advice! I think Megan was quite surprised that I was not upset when I picked her up. We talked about what happened and by the time we got home she admitted that she should have gotten the detention. Usually she just comes up with all kinds of reasons why it wasn't her fault. The only thing I did have her do was write an apology to the teacher for disrupting her class.

Thanks for your advice and I'm sure you'll be hearing from me again.

Sincerely,

A.

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:17PM (-07:00)



# Sleep Deprivation or Depression ?

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

We are homeschoolers of a 16 and a half year old son. We also attend church. He has always been a strong willed child.....but lately he has become very hateful at times and up and down with his emotions... almost at the drop of a hat. We have found out he is not sleeping well at night and he has got to the point where he cannot stay awake during school work or anything else. He is barely making it with his school work and doesn't seem to care. He is very musical and has decided that music is all he cares about and wants to do. As a christian kid you would think that he has never learned a thing about how to treat people with respect. We tried to get him to consider taking something to help him sleep better and he refuses. I think he is suffering from sleep deprivation. He won't talk about anything with us....he just gets mad and asks why we care. How do you deal with a sleep deprived kid when he refuses to try anything to help him get better!

He had a breakup with a girlfriend that seemed to totally mess him up and he hasn't been sleeping well since.

Thank you for your course ...before we got it, we felt like there was no hope....maybe I missed it but I didn't see anything on sleep deprivation. Again...thank you for the hope you've given us.

PS...All we are asking him to try is melatonin...which is a natural substance. He just refuses to even consider it.

.....

Hi R.,

I'm not sure sleep deprivation is the issue here (depression more likely). But since you asked about it specifically, I'll give you some tips to share with your son:

- Crazy video games. Video games may also cause your brain to enter the overdrive zone. If you play video games, don't do them just before you go to bed.
- Do you really need that after-school job? This might be a really tough decision, too. Some students need to work so they can pay for car insurance or save up for college. You'll just have to decide on your own, what's necessary and what's not.
- Don't think too hard right before bed time. If you have calculus homework, you might not want to put it off until night. It's harder to relax and get to sleep when your mind is stuck in the deep-thinking mode. It takes awhile to unwind, so maybe you should tackle the hardest subject earlier.
- Keep track of time. Often, students have great intentions, but other tasks seem to keep them up late, time after time. That's because teens have to develop an understanding of time management and task completion. It's hard to put a timetable on things like running an errand or completing a science experiment. Start keeping track of things you do routinely and the amount of time needed to do certain tasks. Then plan ahead so you can get to bed on time.

- Limit after-school activities. It's hard to do, but try to limit your extracurriculars. Sometimes you just have to make a hard choice and stick to it. You may need to strike a balance between making time for homework and sleep and gaining valuable experience in an extracurricular activity that will help your chances of getting into a great college. Know your priorities.
- Play music if you want, but not too loud. Many people play music at night. If it doesn't bother you, go ahead. Don't play it too loud, though, or it will disrupt your sleep.
- Try caffeine free drinks. Try reducing caffeine by switching to something healthier, like bottled water. OK, if that's too much to ask, at least try a caffeine-free version of your favorite drink!
- Turn off the cell phone. What's so important it can't wait until morning? Unless you have a really good reason--like your parent works at night and might need to reach you, turn it off and get some rest.
- Turn off the TV at night. Some teens fall asleep with the TV on, and some are so used to the noise they think they can't sleep without it. Not true! The TV noises and flashing lights will only keep you from getting a sound sleep. If you can remember things you heard during your sleep, you're not sleeping well.

Good luck,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:18AM (-07:00)

## He is attempting to manipulate us over this...

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Hi Mark

The situation with our son is almost at breaking point now.

He knows we expect him to go to college (three days a week), but we have always said if he would prefer to get a job that's fine, as long as he finds that job before jacking in college. He's 17 so he doesn't \*have\* to be in education, although if he doesn't complete his course he won't get a good reference. Plus he has something of a criminal record which will go against him - it would be good to stay in education to put some distance between that and his job application. But it's his life...

Anyway he has decided to jack in college in reaction to one of our boundaries, which he thinks is a stupid rule. We don't want him to have his girlfriend sleep in his room. It's our house and we're not comfortable with it, not least because we have two younger daughters to consider.

He is attempting to manipulate us over this. First he swore a lot and was rude. Then he said he wouldn't speak to us, all of which was no skin off our back. Then he skipped college, so I turned off his phone and stopped his allowance. Now he got a friend to buy

him a new phone so I can't switch it off. Today he announced we had until this evening to change our stupid rule or he will quit college. We haven't moved on it so he's going into college tomorrow and telling them it's his last day. I'm fine with not trying to save him from the consequences of that.

If he chooses not to accept our limits about the girlfriend he chooses our consequence, which is I suspend his allowance. Would I be right to suspend his allowance because he is making these strong threats? Or should I wait until he actually does it? I turned his phone off because that was the consequence of not going to college and now he has a new phone I can't touch it, but that seems irrelevant since he's not going to college anyway. So do I give him his allowance this weekend as if nothing has happened because he hasn't so far disrespected our rule, only threatened to? Or do I take his action of quitting as a serious enough disrespect for our rules in general anyway?

I'm worried that our consequence of not giving him his allowance if he sneaks her in at night would be a step too late - if he's already had his allowance that week he won't be bothered about not getting next week's because he only think short term.

He is also threatening other things vaguely. He looks at me aggressively and promises that this will 'get worse'. We have invited him to leave if he can't live with our rules, but now he seems to be staking a claim here and saying we will have to actually kick him out. If he left he could only go to friends on a short term basis and he knows he would then have to come back.

What do I do about his veiled threats? I am concerned that he is talking about something that will necessitate me taking steps of protection...

Cheers

M.

.....

Hi M.,

I think you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about an allowance at this stage of the game. He is an adult. Shift to helping him make plans to move out. Put it in writing – short and sweet – and let him know he has a deadline to be packed up and moved out.

That's right - begin to focus on having him move out at this point. All the other stuff you listed in your email is water under the bridge. Here's what one single father did who was in the same boat as you:

1. He told his son he had a deadline to be moved out (the day after his 18th birthday).
2. One month before the deadline, he took his son apartment shopping.
3. His son didn't like any of the apartments – so Dad said, "Do YOU want to pick – or do you want ME to pick?" ...The son picked.
4. Dad helped his son move – and even paid the first 2 months rent.
5. Lastly, he told his son he is always welcome to come home for a visit – but can no longer live there. Dad also said, "In the event you get evicted for not paying your rent, there is a Mission - The Christian Center on Main Street - that will take you in temporarily."

End of story.

This father was not being cruel – quite the opposite. He was a good student of Online Parent Support and knew exactly what he had to do to “foster the development of self-reliance” in his son.

The latest parenting challenge is dealing with emerging adults who have no intention of leaving the nest. Many 18 to 25-year-olds either return home after college or they've never even left home. The media refers to them as "Boomerang Kids." Parents are worried that their kids won't leave home.

This new phenomenon is highlighted in the movie "Failure to Launch." Matthew McConaughey plays Tripp, 30-something bachelor whose parents want him out of the house. They hired Paula (Sarah Jessica Parker), an interventionist, to help him move out. Paula has a track record of successfully boosting men's self-confidence to cause them to want to be independent.

Interestingly, this story line is not as far-fetched as it may seem. Young adults are indeed becoming more difficult to coax out of their comfy childhood homes. Since the '70s, the number of 26-year-olds still living at home has nearly doubled! Here are the top four factors contributing to this change:

**They Are Unprepared**—They are overwhelmed or unmotivated to live independently. They would rather play it safe by occupying the family home, playing computer games, and delivering pizza.

These kids often grow up living the life of the privileged. Here well-meaning parents provide their children with all the amenities congruent with an affluent lifestyle. The parents are focused on doing more for their children than what their parents did for them—at the expense of keeping them dependent. Kids don't move out because they've got it made!

When your financial generosity isn't combined with teaching kids how to become self-sufficient at an early age, we cannot expect them to automatically possess adequate life skills when they reach legal adulthood. How will they gain the skills to confidently live their own life, when they haven't had the opportunity to do things for themselves?

**They Are Cautious or Clueless**—They are committed, but unsure how to discover their ideal career path. They approach college with the same trial and error mindset their parents had only to find out that it no longer prepares them for today's competitive world.

Parents do their kids a disservice by waiting until they are 17 or 18 before initiating career-related discussions. In our dynamic society where change is a daily diet, this is much too late! It's best to start young, at age 13.

This stage of development is the perfect time to begin connecting the dots between what they love to do and possible career options. It can take years to prepare for the perfect career. Beginning early will help teens maximize their opportunities in high school and make college a much better investment.

**They Have Personal Problems**—They don't have effective life coping skills, have failed

relationships or are grieving some other loss or wrestling with a challenging life event.

In "Failure to Launch," we learn that Tripp's parents indulged him largely because the woman he loved died and he hadn't gotten over his loss. When Tripp fell in love with Paula—the new girl of his dreams—his self-sabotaging habit of dumping a girl before she can get too close got reactivated. Finally, his friends intervene and Tripp eventually faces his demons, to everyone's delight.

If your teen is struggling emotionally, don't make the mistake of thinking it will somehow magically get better without an intervention. Tough love requires that you insist your adolescent get professional help so that he or she can move forward. If you don't know how to have that kind of conversation, consider getting help from a parenting expert.

**They Have Mounting Debt**—They've accumulated significant credit card debt and moving back in with their parents is a way to pay it off.

According to the National Credit Card Research Foundation, 55% of students ages 16-22 have at least one credit card. If your teen falls into this group, make sure you monitor spending together online. Helping your teen understand how to budget and manage credit cards will be important for handling a household budget in the future.

Kids can't learn to manage money if they don't have any, or if parents always pay for everything. If your offspring moves back home, I recommend you charge a nominal amount for room and board. As an adult member of your household, it's important for your young adult to contribute to household chores and expenses.

If the purpose of your child's return home is to pay off bills or a college loan, have a realistic plan and stick to the plan to make sure your young adult moves out of the house.

**Determine Goals and Stick to Them**—Most parents enjoy having their children visit and will consider offering some short-term help. However, indulging an adult child's inaction does not help your son begin his own life. If your child defaults on your agreement, be willing to enforce consequences, to help him launch into responsible adulthood.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:02AM (-07:00)

## Pervasive developmental disorder...

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Mark-

The school has diagnosed my 13 yo w/PDD. Haven't heard of this and have no idea what it is. Please fill me in.

Thanks,

J.

.....

Hi J.,

The diagnostic category pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), as opposed to specific developmental disorders (SDD), refers to a group of five disorders characterized by delays in the development of multiple basic functions including socialization and communication. The pervasive developmental disorders are:

- Autism, the most commonly known,
- Rett syndrome,
- Childhood disintegrative disorder,
- Asperger syndrome, and
- Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), which includes atypical autism.

Parents may note symptoms of PDD as early as infancy and typically onset is prior to three years of age. PDD itself does not affect life expectancy.

There is a division among doctors on the use of the term PDD. Many use the term PDD as a short way of saying PDD-NOS. Others use the general category label of PDD because they are hesitant to diagnose very young kids with a specific type of PDD, such as autism. Both approaches contribute to confusion about the term, because the term PDD actually refers to a category of disorders and is not a diagnostic label.

PDD-NOS is often incorrectly referred to as simply "PDD." The term PDD refers to the class of conditions to which autism belongs. PDD is not itself a diagnosis, while PDD-NOS is a diagnosis. To further complicate the issue, PDD-NOS can also be referred to as "atypical personality development," "atypical PDD," or "atypical Autism".

Because of the "NOS", which means "not otherwise specified", it is hard to describe what PDD-NOS is, other than it being an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Some people diagnosed with PDD-NOS are close to having Asperger syndrome, but do not quite fit. Others have near full fledged autism, but without some of its symptoms. The psychology field is considering creating several subclasses within PDD-NOS.

Symptoms of PDD may include communication problems such as:

- Difficulty using and understanding language
- Difficulty relating to people, objects, and events; for example, lack of eye contact or pointing behavior
- Unusual play with toys and other objects
- Difficulty with changes in routine or familiar surroundings
- Repetitive body movements or behavior patterns

Autism, a developmental brain disorder characterized by impaired social interaction and communication skills, and limited range of activities and interests, is the most characteristic and best studied PDD. Other types of PDD include Asperger's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, Rett syndrome, and PDD not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS).

Kids with PDD vary widely in abilities, intelligence, and behaviors. Some kids do not

speak at all, others speak in limited phrases or conversations, and some have relatively normal language development. Repetitive play skills and limited social skills are generally evident as well. Unusual responses to sensory information – loud noises, lights – are also common.

Diagnosis is usually done during early childhood. Some clinicians use PDD-NOS as a "temporary" diagnosis for kids under the age of 5, when for whatever reason there is a reluctance to diagnose autism. There are several justifications for this: very young kids have limited social interaction and communication skills to begin with, therefore it can be tricky to diagnose milder cases of autism in toddlerhood. The unspoken assumption is that by the age of 5, unusual behaviors will either resolve or develop into diagnosable autism. However, some parents view the PDD label as no more than a euphemism for autism spectrum disorders, problematic because this label makes it more difficult to receive aid for Early Childhood Intervention.

There is no known cure for PDD. Medications are used to address certain behavioral problems; therapy for kids with PDD should be specialized according to the youngster's specific needs.

Some kids with PDD benefit from specialized classrooms in which the class size is small and instruction is given on a one-to-one basis. Others function well in standard special education classes or regular classes with support. Early intervention, including appropriate and specialized educational programs and support services play a critical role in improving the outcome of individuals with PDD. PDD is very commonly found in individuals and especially in kids with the range of 2 to 5 years of age. These signs can be easily detected within the classroom settings, home, etc.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:15AM (-07:00)

## Children Who Set Fires

Thursday, March 26, 2009

A child pyromaniac is one who suffers from an impulse-control disorder that is primarily distinguished by a compulsion to set fires in order to relieve built-up tension.

Most young kids are not diagnosed as having pyromania but rather conduct disorders. A key feature of pyromania is repeated association with fire but without a real motive. Pyromania is a very rare disorder and only occurs in about one percent of the population. It can occur in kids as young as three years old.

About ninety percent of the people officially diagnosed with pyromania are male. Pyromaniacs only set about 14% of fires.

Many clinical studies have found that fire setting rarely occurs by itself but usually occurs with other bad behavior. The motives that have recently earned the most attention are pleasure, a cry for help, retaliation against adults, and desire to reunite the family.

It seems like it is a combination of pyromania and bad behavior that initiates fire setting.

Fire setting among kids and teenagers can be recurring or periodic. Some kids and teens may set fires often to release tension.

But then there are others that may only seek to set fires during times of great stress. Some of the symptoms of pyromania are depression, conflicts in relationships, and poor ability to cope with stress and anxiety.

The clinician's handbook, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, also known as the DSM, gives six standards that must be met for a kid to be officially diagnosed with pyromania.

1. The kid had to have set more than one fire deliberately.
2. Before setting the fire, the kid must have felt some feelings of tension or arousal
3. The kid must show that he is attracted to fire and anything related to fire
4. The kid must feel a sense of relief or satisfaction from setting the fire and witnessing it
5. The kid does not have other motives like revenge, financial motives, delusions or brain damage for setting the fire
6. This fire setting problem cannot be attributed to other disorders like anti-social personality disorder or conduct disorders.

Even though fire setting and pyromania are more prevalent in kids these standards are hard to apply to their age group. There is not a lot of experience in diagnosing pyromania mainly because of the little experience that health care professionals have with fire setting.

In terms of prevention, education and treatment in Juvenile Fire-setting, the Brandon School and Residential Treatment Center in Natick, MA offers two leading programs in this field. Their Rapid Fire-setting Treatment Program and Intensive Fire-setting Treatment Programs, among the only programs of their kind in the country, lead the Juvenile Fire-setting field in terms of evaluation, research, education and treatment; it is cutting-edge in working to define best practice standards. Furthermore, in collaboration with the Department of Fire Services, Brandon hosts the annual Northeast Juvenile Fire-setting Conference, which brings together the different disciplines impacted by juvenile fire-setting. During this time, social service, fire service, public safety, juvenile justice, education, and mental health professionals attend workshops by national experts to learn how to more effectively intervene in and prevent juvenile fire-setting.

There are many important distinctions between a kid pyromaniac and a kid fire setter. A fire setter is any individual who feels the impulse to set a fire for unusual reasons. A kid pyromaniac has the intent to inflict damage as a result of its fire setting.

Whereas a kid fire setter usually is curious about fire and has the desire to learn more about fire. A kid pyromaniac is more than just a simple fire setter; he is one who has an unusually bizarre impulse or desire to set intentional fires.

Pathological fire setting, pyromania, is when the desire to set fires is repetitive and destructive to people or property. The most important difference between pyromania and fire setting is pyromania is a mental disorder whereas fire setting is a behavior and can be fixed.

Minor or non-severe fire setting is defined as "accidental or occasional fire-starting behavior" by unsupervised kids. Usually these fires are started when a curious kid plays



with matches, lighters, or small fires. Juveniles in this minor group average at the most 2.5 accidental fires in their lifetime.

Most kids in this group are between five and ten years of age and don't realize the dangers of playing with fire. Pathological fire setting or pyromania is when the action is "a deliberate, planned, and persistent behavior." Juveniles in this severe group set about 5.3 fires. Most young kids are not diagnosed as having pyromania but conduct disorders.

There are two basic types of kids that start fires. The first type is the curiosity fire setter who starts the fire just to find out what will happen. The second type is the problem fire setter who usually sets fires based on changes in his environment or because of a pathological reason.

Fire-setting is made up with five subcategories: the curious fire-setter, the sexually motivated fire-setter, the "cry for help" fire-setter, "severely disturbed" group, and the rare form of pyromania. Pyromania usually surfaces in childhood, but there is no conclusive data about the normal age of onset.

Kid pyromaniacs are usually filled with an uncontrollable urge to set fires to relieve tension. Not much is known about what genetically causes pyromania but there have been many studies that have explored the topic.

The causes of fire setting among young kids and youths can be attributed to many factors, which are divided into individual factors, and environmental factors:

#### Individual Factors:

1. Antisocial behaviors and attitudes: Kids that set fires usually don't only set fires but also commit other crimes or offenses including vandalism, violence, anger, etc.
2. Sensation seeking: Some kids are attracted to fire setting because they are bored and just looking for something to do.
3. Attention seeking: Lighting a fire becomes a way to get back at the adults and in turn to produce a response from the adults
4. Lack of social skills: Some kids simply have not been taught enough social skills. Many of the kids and adolescents that have been discovered setting fires consider themselves to be "loners"
5. Lack of fire-safety skills and ignorance of their danger: For most kids not diagnosed with pyromania this is what drives them. Just natural curiosity and ignorance of the fire's destructive power.
6. Learning problems
7. Parental Problems like separation, neglect, and abuse

#### Environmental Factors:

1. Poor supervision by parents or guardians.
2. Watching adults using fire inappropriately at an early age

3. Parental neglect
4. Parents abusing drugs or acting violently: This factor has been studied and the conclusions show that fire setters are more likely in homes where the parents abuse them
5. Peer Pressure
6. Stressful Life Events: Fire setting becomes a way to cope with crises

There has also been some medical research done that suggests a link to reactive hypoglycemia in the cerebrospinal fluid. Some of the similarities that have been discovered between the two are abnormalities in levels of neurotransmitters norepinephrine and serotonin, which refer to problems in impulse control, and low blood sugars.

If a kid is diagnosed with pyromania there are treatment options even though there has not been enough scientific research on the genetic cause of pyromania especially in such a young age. Studies have shown that kids with repeat cases of setting fires tend to respond better to a case-management approach rather than a medical approach.

The first crucial step for treatment should be parents sitting down with their kid and having a one-on-one interview. The interview itself should try to determine what stresses on the family, methods of discipline, and other factors contribute to the kid's uncontrollable desire to set fires. Some examples of treatment methods are problem-solving skills, anger management, communication skills, Aggression Replacement Training, and cognitive restructuring.

The chances that a kid will recover from pyromania are very slim according to recent studies but there are ways to channel the kid's desire to set fires to relieve tension. When a kid diagnosed with pyromania feels the compulsion to start fire if the parents have suggested alternate ideas such as playing a sport or an instrument there is a chance that a kid can learn how to gain a thin grasp on his irresistible urge to set fires.

Another method of treatment is fire-safety education. But sometimes the best method of treatment is kid counseling or a residential treatment center.

However, since cases of kid pyromania are so rare there has not been enough research done on how successful these treatment methods really are in helping these kids. The most common and effective treatment of pyromania in kids is behavioral modification. The results usually range from fair to poor. Behavioral modification seems to work on kids with pyromaniac tendencies about 95% of the time.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:27AM (-07:00)

## He knows he's been spoiled by me...

Friday, March 27, 2009

My son talked to me last night about his future life plans and your program has helped him discover that he really is afraid of growing up and having to become more responsible for himself and his needs. He discussed the fact that he didn't feel ready to go away from home to attend college, but would rather get his feet wet at our community college and stay at home for 2 yrs. before transferring to a big school. He admitted that

he knows he's been spoiled by me and that he has to learn to take on his own responsibilities, but the fear is there. What a breakthrough for him. I told him I would support whatever decisions he made as long as they were realistic and he was committed. Knowing/trusting I am here as a safety net has made him feel more confident in moving forward with his life. I think becoming 18 (in Oct.) came a lot quicker than he realized. I know it did for me. I believe because of working your program, just in the nick of time, it has really gotten him to look at himself and begin to prepare for adulthood. Thank you so much.

D.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:29AM (-07:00)

## Forgiveness and humbleness does lighten the heart...

Friday, March 27, 2009

Hello Mr. Hutten,

This is G\_\_ from New Jersey writing you again. I joined your online support group this evening and I'm finding it very informative. It's now around 11:18pm and I'm still going through the videos and information for week one. I feel that it's that important. I already feel a sense of control, especially after taking the parent quiz. What an eye opener!

I signed our son up for school counseling this week, prior to joining the online group. I almost wish that I had waited. Hopefully our son will understand that we love him and want only the best for him. Since he is adopted, we know that he has so many questions and at times feels lost. I think that we over compensated for everything.....this is a part of life and this too will run its course.

I look forward to participating in the online groups and getting the CD. It's a lot to absorb....but I feel that it is truly worth the investment.

Thank you and I look forward to communicating with you and letting you know our progress.

Signed....Mom.....without love....what do we have. Forgiveness and humbleness does lighten the heart.

G\_\_ (NJ)

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:34AM (-07:00)

## 15 yr old daughter holding a lot of anger with her Dad...

Friday, March 27, 2009

Mark-

The problem I have with my 15 yr old daughter is that she also keeps holding a lot of anger especially with her Dad. He has been in and out a few times, either way he has been here now since last July and she still gives him a hard time. Right now I am going to be doing this on my own for now. They are not speaking at the moment. Can I implement this on my own anyway? He knows I am going to attempt it so I don't think he will interfere with it.

I hope they will get back to speaking to each other soon. I think the resentment, anger and forgiveness are difficult for the 2 of them.

Thanks,

S.

.....

Hi S.,

About 90% of OPS members are single moms -- so yes, you can implement this on your own (and you're in good company).

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:36AM (-07:00)

## He keeps on pushing some limits...

Monday, March 30, 2009

Mark

My son (16) is settling back at home fine now but he keeps on pushing some limits. Although he is not shouting at me or throwing things or going out at the moment, he will not listen to the little things. For example, I said I would pay for his summer ball if he cleaned the following rooms for me in the house and he chose 3 task cards. However, some of the details on the task cards he has not completed and the deadline which was set for him on Wednesday last week was to complete all 3 by Saturday night. He completed 1 full, the 2nd (75%) and left out the last (3rd) as it was to sweep up the front lawn. He said he would do that at night so no one could watch him (neighbours). The consequence for not completing all 3 was that I could cancel the cheque on Monday.

Question: Should I go through with cancelling the cheque tomorrow now.

Overall he is behaving much better this past week and there has been nothing but politeness from him and a good mood. Is this what you would call the "not so important things" or should I follow through and risk a possible breakdown again? Or just have a chat with him. I would really value your advice.

.....

Re: Should I go through with cancelling the cheque tomorrow now.

If you are seeing some improvement in his overall behavior, then you may want to lower your standards a bit for the short term. But tell him the following: "In the future, if you've been given a set of chores to do -- and you do not complete all of them -- then you will not receive the privilege you have asked for until ALL chores are completed."

Be sure to follow through with this consequence in the event he cheats on his chores again.

Also, please review the info on chores in "The Art of Saying Yes" [session #2 - online version of the ebook] – specifically as it relates to putting time limits on chore completion.

Mark

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:21AM (-07:00)

## A boy she likes asked her for a blowjob...

Wednesday, April 01, 2009

Dear Mr. Hutten:

I am at wits end about my teenage daughter. I just recently found a notebook that her and her girlfriend have been passing back and forth. She wrote to her girlfriend that a boy she likes asked her for a blowjob do you think he is using me. She is only 12 yrs old she will be 13 in May. I have talked to her continuously regarding that oral sex is sex and all the STD's she could possibly get from this behavior. She said she didn't do anything swears up and down she didn't but the rumor spread around school and also came back to me. Please help me on how to deal with this problem. I can't sleep at night thinking she could possibly do something like this. All the conversations I have had with her thinking I could prevent that she would not get involved with this behavior hasn't worked. I can't trust her anymore. I don't let her run the streets like other children do, I just can't believe this is happening, I am so afraid of what the future is going to bring. Please help me to handle this problem correctly.

I appreciate anything you could do for me. Maybe counseling in my area. I am from \_\_\_\_, Massachusetts.

Thank You,

D.

.....

Hi D.,

The topic of sexuality and adolescents often makes mothers and adolescents uncomfortable. It can be difficult for some mothers to even broach the subject of sexuality, and even more difficult should the parent suspect their child is sexually promiscuous. Few mothers want to confront the issues of sexual promiscuity or inappropriate sexual behavior in their children, yet avoiding such behavioral problems can be as risky as the behaviors themselves. Not only does sexual promiscuity cause serious health risks to your child, it can damage self-esteem and the emotional health of a developing adolescent.

Adolescents often partake in risk-taking behaviors. This seems to be a common theme among adolescents, but it can become a serious issue in troubled adolescents. Sex may become an outlet for a struggling teen's frustrations, much in the same way drugs and alcohol serve as an outlet. In this way, sex becomes a drug, a way to escape feelings and emotional confusion. However, as with any drug, there is a backlash. Any teenager who is acting out sexually will begin to feel a diminished sense of value and self-esteem.

In some cases, sex can be used as a weapon or defense. An adolescent might see promiscuous sex as a way of showing mothers that he or she is "free," an adult, someone who can "do whatever" they want to do. Allowing a young person to continue to see sex in such an emotional immature and self-destructive manner can lead to long-term problems with intimate relationships, as well as the child's physical health.

Mothers can best help their teens from becoming sexually active by maintaining a warm and loving relationship with their children – and letting teens know that they are expected to abstain from sex until marriage.

Mothers who are involved in their children's lives, and who confidently transmit their religious and moral values to their children, have the greatest success in preventing risky and immoral behavior. For this reason, it is more important for adolescents to see real-life examples of people who understand and deal responsibly with their sexual natures.

Morals are not abstractions. Morals have to do with real-life commitments to people and things that have value. Mothers and other influential adults (at school, at church, and in the community) need to show adolescents the difference between devotion and infatuation and help them make the distinction in their own hearts.

The sexualization of girls and mental health problems—

In response to reports by journalists, child advocacy organizations, parents, and psychologists, in 2007 the American Psychological Association (APA) created a Task Force to consider these issues. The Task Force Report concluded that the sexualization of girls is a broad and increasing problem and is harmful to girls' self-image and healthy development. Sexualization is defined as occurring when a person's value comes only from her/his sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics, and when a person is sexually objectified, e.g., made into a thing for another's sexual use. The report states that examples of sexualization are found in all forms of media, and as 'new media' have been created and access to media has become omnipresent, examples have increased.

The APA Task Force Report states that sexualization has negative effects in a variety of domains:

- Cognitive and emotional health: Sexualization and objectification undermine a person's confidence in and comfort with her own body, leading to emotional and self-image problems, such as shame and anxiety.
- Mental and physical health: Research links sexualization with three of the most common mental health problems diagnosed in girls and women—eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed mood.
- Sexual development: Research suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences on girls' ability to develop a healthy sexual self-image.

How can parents help their daughters develop healthy self-esteem?

Although the media, peers, and pop culture influence children, parents still hold more sway than they think when it comes to having an impact on a daughter's developing self-esteem. Here's how parents can help:

- Monitor your own comments about yourself and your daughter.
- Get dads involved. Girls with active, hardworking dads attend college more often and are more ambitious, more successful in school, more likely to attain careers of their own, less dependent, more self protective, and less likely to date an abusive man.
- Watch your own stereotypes; let daughters help fix the kitchen sink and let sons help make dinner.
- Encourage your daughter to speak her mind.
- Let girls fail - which requires letting them try. Helping them all the time or protecting them, especially if done by dad, can translate into a girl feeling incapable or incompetent.
- Don't limit girls' choices, let them try math, buy them a chemistry kit. Interest, not just expertise, should be motivation enough.
- Get girls involved with sports/physical activity, it can reduce their risk of chronic diseases. Female athletes do better academically and have lower school drop-out rates than non-athletes. Regular physical activity can enhance girls' mental health, reduce symptoms of stress and depression, make them feel strong and competent.
- Watch television, movies, and other media with your daughters and sons. Discuss how images of girls are portrayed.
- Counteract advertisers who take advantage of the typical anxieties and self-doubts of pre-teen and teenage girls by making them feel they need their product to feel "cool." To sensitize them to this trend and to highlight the effect that ads can have on people, discuss the following questions (adapted from the Media Awareness Network) with children:

1. Do you ever feel bad about yourself for not owning something?
2. Have you ever felt that people might like you more if you owned a certain item?
3. Has an ad make you feel that you would like yourself more, or that others would like

you more if you owned the product the ad is selling?

4. Do you worry about your looks? Have you ever felt that people would like you more if your face, body, skin or hair looked different?

5. Has an ad ever made you feel that you would like yourself more, or others would like you more, if you changed your appearance with the product the ad was selling?

It is within the family that a girl first develops a sense of who she is and who she wants to become. Parents armed with knowledge can create a psychological climate that will enable each girl to achieve her full potential. Parents can help their daughters avoid developing, or overcome, negative feelings about themselves and grow into strong, self-confident women.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Daughter

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:50AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Cussing

Thursday, April 02, 2009

Hi Mr. Hutten,

I am finding your program for out of control kids helpful.

The pieces around self reliance and dependency are quite timely as I see the reluctance and regression of my 17 yo son as he completes his junior year of high school and begins to think about college, pg years etc.

Thankfully our son has not been in much trouble. But I find his disrespect for adults (especially me) and his lack of motivation most difficult. I suspect we have fostered this in him by making home too comfortable. Hopefully I/we can make some progress with your strategies and eliminating free handouts.

I am writing to ask about foul language. It seems to appear when he's angry or frustrated. I have made it clear to him that I find it intolerable. So I'm wondering, is this simply a symptom of the deeper rooted problems which I am working on addressing, and so I should simply ignore it or is it something I should address head on?

Hope to hear from you.

Thanks.

T.

.....

Hi T.,

Re: ...is this simply a symptom of the deeper rooted problems which I am working on addressing, and so I should simply ignore it or is it something I should address head on?



If your situation is like that of most parents, you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about cussing. If he calls you names (e.g., bitch) or cusses at you (e.g., fuck you), then this needs a consequence [outlined in session #3 - online version of the eBook]. But in the event he is simply using cuss words as a way to vent, ignore it.

Ignoring behavior is an over-rated parenting strategy, but in this case -- it is the best strategy.

Why?

Because the more you nag, complain, and confront his use of profanity -- the more attention you are giving it -- which reinforces his desire to cuss. Attention is reinforcement. Lack of attention delivers no payoff. Thus, cussing should wane over time.

Pick your battles carefully,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:03AM (-07:00)

## Chores for Pay for Aspergers Son?

Thursday, April 02, 2009

Given my son's level of gridlock, is giving the list of chores for pay, a place to start to break the entitlement cycle? Or is he so Asperger/Rad/Odd/depressed that it only sends him deeper into gridlock?

Thanks,

S.

.....

With respect to Aspergers, while not everyone on the autism spectrum has trouble getting and staying organized, many have a tough time creating a comfortable place to live.

Some Aspergers people have difficulty managing all the tasks that go into maintaining a home. What has to be done first? Where do you begin?

Aspergers people may also have trouble sorting different objects in the home. For example, they may not realize that the enormous pile of "stuff" on the bed can be broken down into separate piles of clothes, books, papers, and trash, and therefore managed more easily. It may be difficult to sort and control things that arrive in the home, with newspapers winding up all over the place and packages left by the door for weeks. It may not be obvious where to store items either.

Well-meaning non-Aspergers friends or relatives can inadvertently put pressure on Aspergers people or assume they are lazy, in fact, they may have be having serious trouble caring for their living quarters, further fueling a sense of frustration.

In any event, chores-for-pay is an appropriate place to start.

Also, please review this page on RAD... click ==> Reactive Attachment Disorder

...and this page on ODD... click ==> Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Good luck,

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:53AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Facebook Problems

Monday, April 06, 2009

Hi,

I had purchase the course a few months ago and was trying to work through t and our daughter (the reason we purchased the course) seemed to be doing better. This morning (The main computer that all the children use has a block on IE so it will only go to approved sites and has software to limit time and function - this was done because of my oldest daughter) I needed to use the computer as I couldn't get my laptop to edit a file correctly and my oldest daughter was on and i noticed that Facebook was up, it is not on the approved site list and noticed that it was a profile of her! It was not really her a it was a slight variation of her name, but it was her. A few months ago we had the same problem with myspace - she had created an account as a 19 year old waitress and it was not a family friendly thing. Both of these instances were due to my wife accidentally shutting off the web filter and she (my daughter) took advantage of it. We put the web filter on a couple of years ago as we found her cruising many XXXXXX porn sites and corresponding with men on different forums. We are now finding that the stories she has been relating lately about different friends are her online friends and she has been giving out our home phone number to these people and they have been calling us recently. We keep thinking that we can trust her then she does things like this. All today knowing that we are so upset with this she seems totally oblivious and is acting like nothing happened. We are at our wits end and nothing seems to be working. I don't know how she learned to do these thing or where she got the idea. My wife s ready to kill her or throw her out of the house - I don't know what to do. I hope that I am not rambling and do admit that I haven't gone through the whole course yet. I am hoping for some advice and direction to take. My daughter is ADHD and on adderall, I don't know if she needs checked for schizophrenic tendencies as the person online is not the girl who lives with us. Please help.

Thanks,

L.

.....

Hi L.,

predators who are everywhere just waiting for naive daughters to introduce themselves. That's why you need to use Facebook privacy settings to keep daughters safe while they have fun on Facebook. These Facebook privacy settings will help keep your daughter safe on Facebook.

Before We Start Changing Facebook Privacy Settings—Here are some Facebook safety settings that you can use to keep strangers away from daughters on Facebook. Before we can start changing Facebook privacy settings you'll need to get to the right page.

At the top of your Facebook page you'll see a link that says "Settings". When you hold your mouse over that link a menu will pop up. Click on "Privacy Settings" from that menu.

Now we're ready to change your Facebook privacy settings to keep your daughters safe.

1. Who Can See Your Daughter's Profile Information? It's important to make sure that strangers (aka those not on the friend list) can't see your daughter's profile information. This includes such things as photos, personal information, videos, their friend list, and anything else they may include on their profile.

To adjust your daughter's Facebook profile security settings start at the privacy settings page. Then click on the "Profile" link. From here you can change the privacy settings for your daughter's Facebook profile. For the safest setting choose the option to allow only friends to view all of the settings on the page.

2. Who Can See Your Daughter's Photos? Don't let just anyone see the photos your daughter puts up. Daughters like to post photos of themselves and their friends, definitely something you don't want a predator to see. This is a setting you'll have to teach your daughter to use, or go in occasionally and do yourself. Each photo has it's own setting so every time a photo is added, the security setting will need to be changed.

To adjust individual photo settings on your daughter's Facebook profile start at the privacy settings page. Then, as before, click on the "Profile" link. Scroll down the page a bit and you'll see a link that says "Edit Photo Albums Privacy Settings", click on this link. Now choose "Only Friends" as the privacy setting for every photo to keep your daughter safest.

3. Who Can See Your Daughter's Personal Information? These are things like your daughter's IM screen name, email address, website URL, address and phone number. There's no way you want this information out there for all to see. Go in and change this Facebook privacy setting immediately.

From the Facebook privacy page again click on "Profile". This time also click on the "Contact Information" tab to change these privacy settings. Change all the security settings on this page to "No One" for the most secure setting.

4. Who Can Find Your Daughter's Profile? As a default setting on Facebook, anyone can do a search and find anyone else using Facebook's search tool. Keep people from finding your daughter's profile in the first place by changing this Facebook privacy setting.

Starting from Facebook's privacy page click on "Search". Where it says "Search Visibility" choose the options that says "Only Friends". Then under where it says "Public Search Listing" make sure the box is unchecked. These settings will ensure that only people on

your daughter's friend list will be able to find him in search.

5. How Can People Contact Your Daughter? When someone comes across your daughter's profile they may want to contact them for some reason. Maybe to ask to be added to her friend list or maybe to ask her a question. You can control what that person can see on your daughter's profile while they're there.

Starting from Facebook's privacy page click on "Search". Then scroll down to the bottom of the page. There you'll see the "How Can People Contact You" section. Choose to disallow strangers from seeing your daughter's photo or their friend list. Then choose whether to allow or disallow people from adding your daughter as a friend. Most importantly, you'll need to decide whether you want strangers to be able to contact your daughter at all.

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:57AM (-07:00)

## Cell Phone Abuse

Tuesday, April 07, 2009

Suppose you have a child who when she is told that she is being disciplined for her cell phone and has lost the privilege to use it for 2 days. The problem is she refuses to give me the cell phone. What can i do so as not to get in a power struggle.

Her suggestion is she will put it in the box and not use it.

How can I handle this type of situation?

Thank you.

S.

.....

I would cancel her plan then. She's holding you hostage. Give her a warning first: "If you choose to avoid this consequence (i.e., turning your cell phone in for 2 days), then you will choose a stiffer consequence -- your cell plan will be canceled."

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:44AM (-07:00)

# 5 Teen Behavior Problems & Their Solutions

Tuesday, April 07, 2009

Is your kid rebelling, defying your curfew, or hanging out with questionable kids? Here's how to nip behavior problems in the bud.

To be fair, no one has ever pretended that parenting a kid was going to be easy. Still, until your own kids reach that stage, it's tempting to believe your family will be immune to teen behavior problems. No, you tell yourself, your kid will never talk back, stay out too late or pierce her eyebrow.

Dream on.

Adolescents are basically hard-wired to butt heads with their moms & dads, says Stuart Goldman, MD, director of psychiatric education at Children's Hospital in Boston. "Adolescence is a time of rapid change for kids both physically and cognitively," he explains. "It's the task of the kid to fire their moms & dads and then re-hire them years later, but as consultants rather than managers."

But that doesn't mean you have to take it lying down. With the right approach, you can troubleshoot the following teen behavior problems in a relatively civilized fashion.

## Teen Behavior Problem 1: Your Teen Seems To Hate You

One minute your sweet child is begging you to come on the class trip or to lie down with her while she falls asleep. Then, seemingly overnight, she starts treating you like dirt, discounting everything you say and snickering at your suggestions. If you look closely, you'll see that you've been through this before, when she was a toddler -- only instead of shouting "no!" like a two-year-old would, a kid simply rolls her eyes in disgust.

"It's so hard for moms & dads when this happens," says Nadine Kaslow, PhD, a psychologist specializing in kids and families at Emory University in Atlanta. "But part of adolescence is about separating and individuating, and many kids need to reject their moms & dads in order to find their own identities." Teens focus on their friends more than on their families, which is normal too.

Parent's solution—

Sometimes moms & dads feel so hurt by their teens' treatment that they respond by returning the rejection -- which is a mistake. "Adolescents know that they still need their moms & dads even if they can't admit it," says Goldman. "The roller-coaster they put you on is also the one they're feeling internally." As the parent, you need to stay calm and try to weather this teenage rebellion phase, which usually passes by the time a child is 16 or 17.

But no one's saying your teen should be allowed to be truly nasty or to curse at you; when this happens, you have to enforce basic behavior standards. One solution is the good, old-fashioned approach of: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." By letting your kid know that you're here for him no matter what, you make it more likely that he'll let down his guard and confide in you once in a while, which is a rare treat.

## Teen Behavior Problem 2: Communication Devices Rule Their Lives

It's ironic that teenage forms of communication like IM-ing, text-messaging and talking on cell phones make them less communicative, at least with the people they live with. In today's world, though, forbidding all use of electronic devices is not only unrealistic, but unkind. "Being networked with their friends is critical to most teens," says Goldman.

Parent's solution—

Look at the big picture, advises Susan Bartell, PhD, an adolescent psychologist in New York. If your child is functioning well in school, doing his chores at home and not completely retreating from family life, it's probably best to "lay off." It's also OK to set reasonable limits, such as no "texting" or cell phone calls during dinner. Some moms & dads prefer not to let teens have computers in their rooms, since it makes it harder to supervise computer usage, and this is perfectly reasonable. Many experts also suggest establishing a rule that the computer has to be off at least one hour before bedtime, as a way to ensure that teens get more sleep.

One good way to limit how many minutes your teen spends talking on his cell and texting: Require him to pay his own cell phone bills. And do your best to monitor what your child does when he's online, particularly if he or she is using networking sites like MySpace and Facebook. You still own the home and computer -- so check into parental Internet controls and software to monitor use of any questionable web sites.

## Teen Behavior Problem 3: Staying Out Too Late

It's 10:30 p.m. and you told your daughter to be home by 10 p.m. Why does she ignore your curfew again and again?

"Part of what teens do is test limits," explains Goldman. "But the fact is that they actually want limits, so moms & dads need to keep setting them."

Parent's solution—

Do some research before insisting that your child respect your curfew because it's possible that yours is unreasonable. Call a few of your kids' friends' moms & dads and find out when they expect their kids home. Goldman suggests giving kids a 10-minute grace period, and if they defy that, to set consequences -- such as no going out at night for a week.

If it seems like your child is staying out late because she's up to no good, or doesn't feel happy at home, then you need to talk with her and figure out what might be going on. However, if your curfew is in line with what's typical in your teen's crowd, then it's time to set consequences and then enforce them if your teen continues to break your rules. When you make a rule, you have to mean it. You can't bluff adolescents -- they will always call you on it.

## Teen Behavior Problem 4: Hanging Out with Kids You Don't Like

You wince every time your son traipses through the door with his greasy-haired, noisy buddies. Should you suck it up, or say something?

Parent's solution--

Kids can wear weird clothes, pierce their lips, act rudely and still be decent kids, says Bartell, who advises moms & dads to hold off on criticizing something as superficial as fashion in their kids' friends. "Adolescents are so attached to their friends that it's like criticizing them directly."

On the other hand, if you know that your child has taken up with a group of troubled teens who skip school and do drugs, a talk is in order. "Without putting him on the defensive, tell your child you're concerned about who he's hanging out with and that you're worried he's doing drugs," says Bartell. While you can't forbid your child to hang around with certain kids, you can intervene and try to nip dangerous behaviors in the bud. Don't be afraid to ask for professional help about hanging out with a crowd engaged in negative behavior. Counseling or family therapy can help.

Teen Behavior Problem 5: Everything's a Drama

Every little thing seems to set your daughter off lately, and the more you try to help, the more she sobs or shouts or slams the door.

Part of being a kid is feeling things intensely, so what may seem like no big deal to you is hugely important to her.

Parent's solution—

Moms & dads tend to trivialize the importance of things in adolescents' lives, says Bartell: "What happens is that kids feel misunderstood, and eventually they will stop telling you anything. Right now it is the most important thing in the world that her best friend is flirting with her boyfriend, and you need to take it seriously."

Don't offer advice, disparage her friends or try to minimize it by saying that one day she'll see how silly high school romances are. "Just listen and sympathize," says Bartell. And put yourself in her position -- because, after all, you were once there yourself.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:30AM (-07:00)

## She'll hit herself in the head everytime she doesn't get her way...

Wednesday, April 08, 2009

Hi Mark,

My daughter seems to constantly dwell on negative things, talks about death a lot. When she doesn't get her way, she makes statements such as hurting or killing herself. She's six years old!!! She'll hit herself in the head everytime she doesn't get her way. She has even said she wanted to kill me. She has very poor self esteem, (why I'll never know) she calls herself stupid and an idiot. These things do not come from within our house. This morning she said she wanted to hurt her little sister. I'm very confused because we practice love and logic in our home. Consequences with empathy. We do not spank or

yell. We let the consequence be their punishment. She brings me to tears with her behavior and scares me that she will hurt herself or someone else. I've been reading about childhood Bipolar. Do you think she could be Bipolar? But she turns the switch on and off with control; for instance she's never a problem child at school. All her teachers say she's a model child and is extremely well behaved in their presence. This behavior is not daily, she does have good days, but usually has bad day or two a week. It's also intermittent during the day if it's a bad day. One minute she'll be just fine and as soon as she doesn't get her way, bam, it's like a bomb going off. She uses great manners around other people, but doesn't heistate at all to be rude and very disrespectful to her family members. She uses the word hate a lot. I'm always correcting her and saying "I don't like" is a little nicer way to say you disapprove of something. Please direct me with her. My heart breaks for her and I only want her to be happy, and healthy. I have two other girls, S\_\_\_ 5yrs and A\_\_\_ 18yrs. Neither of these two girls have ever acted this way in a consistent manner. This is not a phase, this is a scary situation. Thank you so much for responding.

C.

.....

Hi C.,

Re: She'll hit herself in the head everytime she doesn't get her way.

This is her weird way of reducing her stress. Please refer the page on cutting:

click ==> [www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/cutting](http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/cutting)

...replace "cutting" with "hitting" and you will gain some insight into this phenomenon.

Re: Do you think she could be Bipolar?

Does bipolar run the the family (parent, grandparent, aunt, etc.)? If so, she should have a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation to rule out bipolar as well as any other childhood disorder.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:01AM (-07:00)

## How can I tell if my 16-year-old son is abusing drugs?

Wednesday, April 08, 2009

Do you think your child or adolescent may be using street drugs or abusing prescription medications like painkillers? Many moms & dads are faced with the difficult question of "Is my adolescent using drugs?" Read on to find out how to tell if your adolescent is using illicit drugs.





#### Things You'll Need:

- A Drug Sniffer Dog for Hire
- A Home Drug Test
- A Notebook
- A Adolescent Who You Suspect May Be Using Drugs
- An Internet Connection
- An Observant Eye

• **ADMINISTER A HOME DRUG TEST:** Home drug tests are now available over-the-counter at most major drug store chains. Moms & dads can give their adolescent a drug test for marijuana, opiates, methamphetamine, cocaine and an array of other illicit drugs.

• **DOES YOUR ADOLESCENT ACT DIFFERENTLY?** Drug users experience high highs and low lows. Is your adolescent giddy, talkative and energetic one minute and sleeping excessively the following day? Is your adolescent edgier and moodier than usual? Also very common in drug users. Again, write down your observations in a notebook - it's often a lot clearer on paper.

• **DOES YOUR ADOLESCENT LOOK DIFFERENT?** Drug users will rapidly gain or lose weight. They will stop showering as frequently and you'll see a drop off in meticulous grooming that's common of adolescents. Pay attention to the adolescent's eyes. Are they bloodshot? Are the pupils dilated? Are the pupils tiny? These are all signs of drug use.

• **DOES YOUR ADOLESCENT SEEM SICK VERY FREQUENTLY?** Drug withdrawal can be easily mistaken for a stomach flu or virus, so if your adolescent seems to vomit frequently or gets the "flu" on a regular basis, this suggests drug use. Does your adolescent sniffle frequently? Is he reluctant to blow his nose? The sniffles or a stuffy nose are commonly associated with drugs like heroin, cocaine and other drugs that are snorted. When a drug user snorts drugs, this causes nasal inflammation that causes sniffing. Many drug users also sniffle frequently after they snort drugs, but they'll be hesitant to blow their nose, lest they blow out the powder that they've sniffed.

• **HIRE A SNIFFER DOG TO SEARCH FOR DRUGS:** Moms & dads can now hire a drug detection dog service to perform a search of the home and car. This can provide moms & dads with the confirmation they need before they confront a adolescent about drug use. A drug sniffer dog can also ease fears of adolescent drug use. These drug detection dogs can detect minute amounts of residue and they are known to be very accurate.

• **IS YOUR ADOLESCENT STEALING MONEY OR VALUABLES?** When recreational drug use turns into a full blown drug habit, a adolescent will need money and lots of it to support his or her drug habit. Is the adolescent suddenly focused on earning money that does not seem to go toward any obvious purchases (i.e. clothing)? Is the adolescent stealing money from family members? Are valuables disappearing from the home? These are all signs that can suggest that a adolescent is seeking money to support a drug habit.

• **LEARN ABOUT DRUG PARAPHERNALIA AND BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR IT IN YOUR ADOLESCENT'S ROOM:** Did you know that a light bulb can be used as drug paraphernalia? Drug paraphernalia can be obvious - like a pipe - or less obvious, like a light bulb. Surf the internet and learn about what household items can be associated with

drug use.

- **LOOK FOR BEHAVIORS THAT INDICATE DRUG USE:** There are many behaviors that indicate drug use. Does your adolescent always wear long sleeves, even when it's hot outside? He may be hiding needle marks on his arms. Does your adolescent try to avoid making eye contact after returning home from friends? This may be due to bloodshot eyes, or dilated/pinpoint pupils that result from using certain drugs. Is your adolescent sneaky and deceptive? Sneaky, deceptive behaviors are very common in adolescents who are using drugs. Look at your adolescent's behavior with a critical eye and keep a notebook recording your observations.

Tips & Warnings—

- Home drug tests (and even professional physician-administered drug tests) are not fool proof. False positives and false negatives can occur. If a adolescent tests positive for a drug, proceed to the nearest hospital or doctor's office for a more reliable drug test. But do it quickly, as some drugs leave the system within a matter of a day or two.
- Surf the internet and learn about the effects of various drugs. If a parent understands how a particular drug affects the body, the parent will be more likely to recognize signs of drug use.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:00AM (-07:00)

## Behavior Problems & Head Injury

Thursday, April 09, 2009

Mark-

Have you ever heard where a blow or brain injury can cause behavioural problems and will show up on a QEEG (quantitative EEG)?

.....

Yes. Head injury survivors may experience a range of neuro-psychological problems following a traumatic brain injury. Depending on the part of the brain affected and the severity of the injury, the result on any one child can vary greatly. Personality changes, memory and judgment deficits, lack of impulse control, and poor concentration are all common. Behavioral changes can be stressful for families and parents who must learn to adapt their communication techniques, established relationships, and expectations of what the impaired child can or cannot do.

In some cases extended cognitive and behavioral rehabilitation in a residential or outpatient setting will be necessary to regain certain skills. A neuropsychologist also may be helpful in assessing cognitive deficits. However, over the long term both the survivor and any involved family members will need to explore what combination of strategies work best to improve the functional and behavioral skills of the impaired child.

Even a child who makes a "good" recovery may go through some personality changes. Family members must be careful to avoid always comparing the impaired child with the

way he/she “used to be.” Personality changes are often an exaggeration of the child's pre-injury personality in which personality traits become intensified. Some changes can be quite striking. It may be, for example, the head injury survivor used to be easy going, energetic, and thoughtful and now seems easily angered, self-absorbed, and unable to show enthusiasm for anything. Nonetheless, try not to criticize or make fun of the impaired child's deficits. This is sure to make the child feel frustrated, angry, or embarrassed.

In some cases, neurological damage after a head injury may cause emotional volatility (intense mood swings or extreme reactions to everyday situations). Such overreactions could be sudden tears, angry outbursts, or laughter. It is important to understand that the child has lost some degree of control over emotional responses. The key to handling lability is recognizing that the behavior is unintentional. Parents should model calm behavior and try not to provoke further stress by being overly critical. Help the child recognize when his/her emotional responses are under control and support/reinforce techniques that work.

Provided a situation does not present a physical threat, various approaches may be used to diffuse hostile behavior:

- Coping with behavior problems after a head injury requires identification and acknowledgment of the impaired child's deficits. A comprehensive neuropsychological assessment is recommended. This may help both the survivor and the family to better understand neurological and cognitive deficits.
- Do not challenge or confront the child. Rather, negotiate (e.g., if you don't like what's planned for dinner tonight, how about choosing Friday's menu?).
- Help cue the child to recognize thoughtlessness. Remind him/her to practice polite behavior. Realize that awareness of other people's feelings may have to be relearned.
- Help the child regain a sense of control by asking if there is anything that would help him/her feel better.
- In some cases, it may be easier for the family caregiver to recognize personality changes than to resolve the problem behavior. Targeted strategies may be used to deal with specific behavioral issues.
- Isolate the disruptive impaired child. Consider you own safety and his/hers. Treat each incident as an isolated occurrence as the survivor may not remember having acted this way before or may need to be prompted to remember. Try to establish consistent, non-confrontational responses from all family members (children may need to learn some “dos” and “don'ts” in reacting to the survivor).
- It is critical that family members seek and receive support (family, friends, support group, counselor) in dealing with their own emotional responses to caring for a head injured loved one.
- Offer alternative ways to express anger (e.g., a punching bag, a gripe list).
- Remain as calm as you can; ignore the behavior.

- Seek support for yourself as a caregiver. Support groups, professional counselors, and, if necessary, protective services or law enforcement may be contacted.
- The child who has survived a head injury may lack empathy. That is, some head injury survivors have difficulty seeing things through someone else's eyes. The result can be thoughtless or hurtful remarks or unreasonable, demanding requests. This behavior stems from a lack of abstract thinking.
- Try to change the child's mood by agreeing with the child (if appropriate) and thus avoiding an argument. Show extra affection and support to address underlying frustrations.
- Try to understand the source of the anger. Is there a way to address the child's need/frustration? (e.g., make a phone call, choose an alternative activity).
- Validate the emotion by identifying the feelings and letting the child know these feelings are legitimate. Frustration over the loss of functional and/or cognitive abilities can reasonably provoke anger.

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:52AM (-07:00)

## Antisocial Behavior in Schools: Help for Teachers

Thursday, April 09, 2009



Discipline should be viewed as an instrument with its primary purpose to allow effective instruction and learning. Proactive approaches are essential. This translates into knowing your children and staying ahead of them and their problems with positive and constructive problem solving that serves to prevent problems before they get out-of-hand. This means the use of learning objectives which provide the child with new and appropriate skills to replace the problem behaviors and lots of positive reinforcement for both the absence of the problem behavior and the exercise of the new adaptive skills.

- Accountability for outcomes is mandatory for any positive program to work with antisocial children. Any plan must include a systematic data-management program to provide such accountability.
- Clear, functional rules and expectations that make sense, improve the learning environment and which have positive benefits for the child if followed are essential.
- Maintenance of a consistent, predictable school environment is essential to any progress for antisocial children.
- Setting high expectations for the children. One of the most serious mistakes is becoming acclimated to the problematic behavior and children and attributing their behavior to outside factors over which they have little or no control. Setting high standards and taking responsibility among teachers sets a model for the children and

children usually perform substantially better as a result.

- Support across teachers in implementing discipline is essential. This means that teachers do not ever undercut each other in front of any children.

The first suggestion is that a set of rules be developed for any classroom that has antisocial children. These rules must be promulgated clearly to each child and posted visibly within the room itself. I usually offer a set of 4 such rules (no threats or violence, no drug talk, no sex talk, and no profanity) as the absolute minimum starting point. Often, the teachers ask if it would be appropriate for the children to be solicited for input on additional rules. I caution them that they do not want too many such rules but that 1 or 2 additional child generated rules might well increase the acceptance of these new limits. Guidelines for developing such rules are:

1) Limit the number of expectations initially to four to six:

- State the expectations in positive terms using Clear, Concrete, and Concise language using as few words as possible.
- Identify specific behaviors to illustrate the range of acceptable variations.
- Identify clear positive and negative examples to illustrate each expectation.

2) Define a process and time lines for identifying expectations:

- Specify who participates in the development of expectations
- Specify how suggestions are to be offered and worded
- Specify how each expectation is going to be agreed upon and how everyone involved will learn about the meaning of each.

The second broad suggestion for the antisocial classroom is that a variety of privileges be identified. It is essential that these be framed for the children as earned privileges and not as lost rights. Such privileges must be both short term/immediate (that day), intermediate (weekly), and long-term (quarterly) to be maximally effective and allow the child the opportunity to test limits and still be able to recover. During my visits I spend a good deal of time observing and asking lots of questions so that I might suggest one or two obvious privileges for which appropriate behavior can be required of the children. A variety of privileges must be identified in order for there always to be a motivator for each children appropriate behavior. Only the teachers, administrators, and children know the circumstances well enough to decide what the range of such privileges might be at any given school. Frequently, in addition to the privileges, there is a list of proscribed behaviors which always "drop" a child immediately to the lowest level (often called "Red" or "Restricted" level), these often include:

- Harming Self or Other
- Leaving School Grounds
- Physical Aggression or Threats (there is no such thing as a threat that is a "joke")
- Property Damage
- Tobacco/Drug talk, use, or possession
- Verbal Aggression or Threats
- Weapons
- Other Behavior determined to be dangerous or harmful

Third, the combination of privileges and a level system means frequent and objective feedback is required for each child regarding their behavior. Many schools divide the day

into hourly segments (and in some instances even ½ hour segments) with points across 5-6 classroom-wide goals and 2-3 personal goals. Typical classroom wide goals include:

- Demonstrates Honesty
- Exhibits Safe Thinking/Behavior
- Follows Rules and Expectations
- Maximizes Abilities/Independence
- Shows Respect for Self and Others

Additionally, personal goals for each child should be added to tailor the system and are typically based on a combination of long-standing needs on the part of the child and recent areas of concern/failure. Examples include such things as "no talking out", "keeping hands/feet to self", "respect for authority", and "absence of abusive language".

Providing adaptive strategies for the child to meet their behavior goal/expectation is the first point of intervention. However, if a child continually has problems with a particular goal or expectation there are a number of strategies, in addition to the privileges discussed above, which may be employed - some of which include:

- Change teaching strategy
- Corrective action plan (agreed to by child)
- Time out
- Separation from peers
- Removal of adult attention
- Redirection
- Deliver a warning and offer the child a choice with consequences for each explained
- Individual child conference (hallway 1:1)

Fourth, physical arrangement of the classroom significantly impacts the success or failure in achieving your behavior goals. Examples include:

- A notice board (not the blackboard) should be in a highly visible high traffic area of the classroom, but should also be positioned so it does not divert attention from instruction.
- Independent work requires an area with minimum distractions, therefore your use of individual desks is important.
- Storage of materials is a problem in all classrooms. Materials should be placed in low traffic areas to avoid distractions but allow relatively free access.
- The teacher's desk should be out of the flow of traffic and allow for the maximizing of both personal safety and confidentiality of materials.

Fifth, transitions are very difficult for antisocial children. Transitions are frequently a time of little or no structure and ambiguity for the child. In order to minimize behavior problems a variety of mechanisms for increasing structure for transitions often help.

- Establish a schedule, not merely for block or class changes but for transitions between types of activities for each period.
- Post the schedule so that children know what to expect.
- Establish procedures for how each transition is accomplished and make certain that the children are aware of these expectations.

Sixth, antisocial children are often seen as low in "self-esteem". One method of addressing this is to offer frequent, realistic, and constructive feedback on both

successes and areas of concern. Actual mastery of a goal and the appropriate acknowledgment of that success by a adult will lead to the development of genuine "self-esteem" or a sense of accomplishment and go a long way to improving "attitudes" among antisocial children. A caution here is that antisocial children are accomplished at sniffing out BS and therefore you must focus only on real accomplishments. Perhaps the most powerful strategy for implementing classroom expectations is to frequently reinforce children who exhibit appropriate behaviors. It is essential that the teachers clearly distinguish between cooperation and acquisition of academic skills - both forms of achievement need to be equally acknowledged with antisocial children.

Finally, all correction interventions with antisocial children should contain a series of steps in which the least intrusive step is followed first and more intrusive measures come into play only if the problem behavior persists. Children, particularly antisocial children have a real need to be able to predict what an adult's response will be (within a range). An example of such a plan:

1. Remove attention from the child who is displaying low level inappropriate behavior, and acknowledge other children nearby who are exhibiting the expected behavior.
2. Redirect the child to the expected behavior with a gesture or verbal prompt, cite the classroom rule being violated, and be sure to acknowledge subsequent cooperation and displays of the expected behavior from the child.
3. Secure the child's attention and clearly inform him or her of the expected behavior, provide immediate opportunities for practice, and acknowledge the changed behavior when it occurs.
4. Deliver a brief warning in a matter-of-fact manner by providing the child an opportunity to choose between displaying the expected behavior or experiencing a penalty or loss of privilege.
5. Deliver the penalty or loss of privilege in a matter-of-fact manner and do not argue with the child about details of the penalty.

The suggestions offered have the best chance of working and are the most fundamental to decreasing suspensions within the antisocial classroom.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:09AM (-07:00)

## Last night was a tough one...

Friday, April 10, 2009

Hi Mark!

Thank you for the welcome!

In desperation we search for answers... last night was a tough one. I have already applied some of what I read. Of course I created scenarios in my head (using the details you suggested). They all had a happy ending. It did not turn out quite the same in reality but there were no tempers and messages were passed.

I appreciate knowing you are there. I will be starting the video tomorrow.

E.

## He got upset and started doing bad things...

Saturday, April 11, 2009

Hi K.,

I've responded throughout your email below:

Mark,

Last two days, my son was behaving well. It seems your methods are working the magic, for two days at least.

Tonight, my son didn't take care of bath room well and he floor was wet after his use. I asked him to wipe the floor. He shouted "later!" by which he meant he wanted to do his activity (has his mom take his picture in his new shorts) first. But I insisted that he wipe the floor first because I wanted to take the bath and he made the mess in the public area. He called my name with clear intention to ignore my order. I told him that if he does not wipe the floor in three minutes, he will not be allowed to access the computer for 24 hours.

Here, my wife questions whether this is the right thing to tell our son when he is upset and doesn't seem to understand what I am telling him. Would you agree?

Partially ... see below—

After he calmed down a little bit, I talked to my wife in front of him, that she should not allow him to access her computer for 24 hours. At that late stage, he got up and tried to go to the bath room. I stopped him and told him that it is too late because he didn't do it within 3 minutes, and I already wiped the floor.

(Should I have allowed him to wipe the floor anyway and let the consequence away?)

Not necessarily...

He got upset and started doing bad things including scratching walls, throwing things, lightly punching me on my shoulder, name calling etc. I could ignore name calling, but what should I react to his punch? Should I let him punch me as long as it doesn't really hurt me?

No. Absolutely not!

Prevention Methods:

First of all, come up with a plan where your son takes a bath/shower without getting water all over the floor (e.g., "...put a towel on the floor before showering and stand on it when you get out"). This could save an argument from happening in the first place.



Second, when your son is calm, give him the following warning [with your best poker face]:

“If you choose to ignore a request to clean up after yourself, you will choose the consequence – I will do your chore for you and you will lose computer privileges for 24 hours. In the event you become physically violent, you will lose computer privileges for 3 days – and run the risk of having the police called because battery and destroying property is illegal.”

Re: Did I apply "When You Want Something From Your Kid" properly?

I'd say you are largely on track.

Keep up the good work,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:51AM (-07:00)

## Re: Time-Outs for Kids: Ages 2-5

Saturday, April 11, 2009



What is time-out?

Time-out is a way of disciplining your youngster for misbehavior without raising your hand or your voice. Time-out involves removing your youngster from the good stuff in life, for a small amount of time, immediately following misbehavior. Time-out for kids is similar to penalties used for

hockey players. When a hockey player has misbehaved on the ice, he is required to go to the penalty area for two minutes. The referee does not scream at, threaten, or hit the player. He merely blows the whistle and points to the penalty area. During the penalty time, the player is not allowed to play, only watch. Time-out bothers hockey players because they would rather play hockey than watch. Keep this hockey comparison in mind when using time-out for your youngster. Kids usually do not like time-out because they would rather play than watch other kids play. So when you use time-out in response to a misbehavior, remove your youngster from whatever he or she is doing and have him or her sit down.

Where should the time-out area be located?

You do not have to use the same location each time. Just make sure the location is convenient for you. For example, using a downstairs chair is inconvenient when the problem behavior occurs upstairs. An adult-sized chair works best, but a step, footstool, bench, or couch will also work. Make sure the area is well-lit and free from all dangerous objects. Also make sure your youngster cannot watch TV or play with toys.

How long should time-out last?

The upper limit should be one quiet minute for every year your youngster has been alive. So if you have a 2-year-old, aim for two quiet minutes. Keep in mind, kids do not like time-out, and they can be very public with their opinion. So it may take some time to get

those two minutes. This is especially true in the beginning when kids do not know the rules and still cannot believe you are doing this to them. For some reason, the calmer you remain, the more upset they are likely to become. This is all part of the process. Discipline works best when you administer it calmly.

So, do not begin the time until your youngster is calm and quiet. If your youngster is crying or throwing a tantrum, it does not count toward the required time. If you start the time because your youngster is quiet but he or she starts to cry or tantrum, wait until your youngster is quiet again and then start the time over. Do not let your youngster leave time-out unless he or she is calm; your youngster must remain seated and be quiet to get out of time-out. Some programs suggest using timers. Timers can be helpful but are not necessary. If you use one, remember the timer is to remind moms & dads that time-out is over, not kids.

What counts as quiet time?

Generally, quiet time occurs when your youngster is not angry or upset, and is not yelling or crying. You must decide when your youngster is calm and quiet. Some kids get perfectly still and quiet while in they're in time-out. Other kids find it hard to sit still and not talk. Fidgeting and "happy talk" should usually count as being calm and quiet. For example, if your son sings or talks softly to himself, that counts as quiet time. Some kids do what we call "dieseling," which is the quiet sniffing that usually follows a tantrum. Since a "dieseling" youngster is usually trying to stop crying but cannot find the off switch, this also should be counted as quiet time.

What if the youngster leaves the chair before time is up?

Say nothing! Calmly (and physically) return your youngster to the chair. For kids who are 2 to 4 years old, unscheduled departures from the chair are a chronic problem early in the time-out process. Stay calm and keep returning the youngster to the chair. If you tire or become angry, invite your spouse (or any adult who is nearby) to assist you as a tag-team partner. If you are alone and become overly tired or angry, retreat with honor. But when help arrives or when your strength returns, set the stage for another time-out.

What if my youngster misbehaves in the chair?

Say nothing and ignore everything that is not dangerous to youngster, yourself, and the furniture. I repeat: Say nothing! What do I mean by nothing? I mean not anything, the absence of something, the empty set, the amount of money you have when you have spent it all, the result of two minus two or what zero equals. I mean nothing. Most of your youngster's behavior in the chair is an attempt to get you to react and say something, anything. So expect the unexpected, especially if you are a nagger, screamer, explainer, warner, reasoner, or just a talker. And I mean the unexpected. They may spit up, wet, blow their nose on their clothes (you may be tempted to say "Yecch" but...do not), strip, throw things, make unkind comments about your parenting skills, or simply say they do not love you anymore. Do not worry. They will love you again when their time is up, believe me.

When should I use time-out?

When you first start, use it for only one or two problem behaviors. After your youngster has learned to "do" time-out, you can expand the list of problem behaviors. In general, problem behaviors fall into three categories: 1) anything dangerous to self or others; 2) defiance and/or noncompliance; and 3) obnoxious or bothersome behavior. Use time-out for "1" and "2" and ignore anything in category "3." If you cannot ignore something, move it into category "2" by issuing a command (e.g., "Take the goldfish out of the toilet."). Then

if the youngster does not comply, you can use time-out for noncompliance. Be sure to use time-out as consistently as possible. For example, try to place your youngster in time-out each time a targeted behavior occurs. I realize you cannot be 100 percent consistent because it is in our nature to adapt. But be as consistent as you can.

In general, immediately following a problem behavior, tell your youngster what he or she did and take him or her to time-out. (With older kids, send them to time-out.) For example, you might say, "No hitting. Go to timeout." Say this calmly and only once. Do not reason or give long explanations to your youngster. If your youngster does not go willingly, take him or her to time-out, using as little force as needed. For example, hold your daughter gently by the hand or wrist and walk to the time-out area. Or, carry her facing away from you (so that she does not confuse a hug and a trip to time-out). As I suggested earlier, avoid giving your youngster a lot of attention while he or she is being put in time-out. Do not argue with, threaten, or spank your youngster. And what should you say? Hint: Starts with "No" and ends with "thing." Answer: Say nothing!

What do I do when time is up?

When the time-out period is over, ask your youngster, "Are you ready to get up?" Your youngster must answer yes in some way (or nod yes) before you give permission for him or her to get up. Do not talk about why the youngster went into time-out, how the youngster behaved while in time-out, or how you want your youngster to behave in the future. In other words, do not nag. If your youngster says "No," answers in an angry tone of voice, or will not answer at all, start time-out over again. If your youngster chooses to stay in the chair, fine. It is hard to cause real trouble in time-out.

What do I do when my youngster leaves the chair?

If you placed your youngster in time-out for not doing what you told him or her to do, repeat the instruction. This will help teach your youngster you mean business. It also gives your youngster a chance to behave in a way that is good for business. If he or she still does not obey the instruction, then place him or her in time-out again. In addition, add in a few other easy-to-follow, one-step commands. If he or she does them, praise the performance. If not, back to time-out. Generally, use this opportunity to train your youngster to follow your instructions when those instructions are delivered in a normal tone of voice without being repeated.

The general rule for ending time-out is to praise a good behavior. Once time-out is over, reward your youngster for the kinds of behaviors you want him or her to use. Catch them being good.

Should I explain the rules of time-out to my youngster?

Before using time-out, you should explain the rules to your youngster once. At a time when your youngster is not misbehaving, explain what time-out is (simply), which problem behaviors time-out will be used for, and how long time-out will last. Practice using time-out with your youngster before using the procedure. While practicing, remind your youngster you are "pretending" this time. They will still go "ballistic" when you do your first real time-outs, but you will be reassured that you have done your part to explain the fine print.

Summary—

1. Be specific and brief when you explain why your youngster must go to time-out.
2. Catch them being good.

3. Choose time-out areas.
4. Do not talk to or look at your youngster during time-out.
5. Explain time-out.
6. If you wanted your youngster to follow an instruction, give him or her another chance after time-out is over. And, in general, deliver a few other easy-to-follow commands so your youngster clearly learns who is in charge and who is not.
7. If your youngster gets up from the chair, return him or her to the chair with no talking.
8. Use time-out every time the problem behaviors occur.
9. Your youngster must answer yes politely when you ask, "Would you like to get up?"
10. Your youngster must be calm and quiet to leave time-out once time is up.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:17AM (-07:00)

## Empty Nest Syndrome?

Monday, April 13, 2009

Hi Mark,

Recently I purchased your Ebook, and I can't help but think we're too late to do anything about our son.

We live in Australia and our son turns 18 in 3 weeks time, this is the legal age in Australia for accessing Alcohol etc.

He has left school and was going to Tafe studying computers (but dropped out). He has an older brother in the ARMY living in DARWIN, thousands of kilometers away. My marriage is very stable so he has/d 2 parents living with him. We always wanted to know where he was and what time he would be home, this always seemed too restricting to him.

In a nutshell, our Son has now left home (quit his job) to live with friends. The motivation behind this is to collect unemployment benefits from the government. (he can't do it under our roof because it's means tested, yes thats right the government splits up families this way!) Approximately a month ago he had a job delivering pizza's which used to fund his loan repayment to me (\$1000 for his car) and petrol for his car to get to his job etc.

Then he started hanging around with some old school mates (buddies) and I can't help but think they brain washed him into quitting his job because he will be better off on benefits. Also most of these mates have lost their license for driving offences, and he taxis them around everywhere now. During one of these episodes my son got busted for curfew and no P Plate display so he too will lose his license soon.

We raised him to be a kind considerate responsible person, but most of this has gone out the window since meeting up with these old school mates. (Still kind and considerate(to his mates) but responsible has gone)

Currently he still isn't on benefits, because you have to say your parents are abusing you, to get benefits under the age of 18, and I don't think he can bring himself to tell this lie, as we've always loved and supported him.

We feel so helpless, we spent 17 years bringing him up to be independent and seek employment etc. and in the first 2 week hanging around with these friends they convinced him to ditch everything. (we can't help but thinking they are preying on his kind nature, because he's always running them somewhere in his car. When we suggest they may be using him, he says they pay him petrol money, and won't listen any further.)

He still comes home for the odd meal (we usually coax him, because we miss him and want to see how hes doing, but he has not slept here for a month.

At the beginning of all this he also split up with his girlfriend. I don't think he's emotionally mature enough for any of this stuff thats going on, everytime we try to speak to him about any of it he more or less blocks his ears, and storms off.

We are toughing it out not giving him any money, (hoping he will come home to survive), so he comes home and gets stuff to sell. It's only stuff he's has bought himself from his job and he sells it to get petrol and maka's money. He loves his driving and freedom.

We don't think he's doing drugs, however he has recently taken up smoking and drinking alcohol.

Our main concern is in 3 weeks he will be eligible for unemployment benefits living at another address(without having to lie about abuse). We are concerned that once he starts he will get stuck in a rut, and not be able to get out of it, like so many young ones do these days. Another concern is he may have the opportunity to apply for an apprenticeship this week, but we now have zero control over his wearabouts etc. and are afraid his so called mates may talk him out of it, so he can get benefits for nothing in 3 weeks.

He is a bright kid with lots of potential, in a way he seems to have given up on himself. He always struggled with school as he never was interested, however he can build a computer from parts and install all the necessary software etc. no problems.

We had him tested for adhd years ago it was negative, however reading your Ebook, I can answer yes to just about all questions, appart from violence. However it also seems to describe most teenagers to some degree. He's has had several jobs already and is a really likeable guy, he gets bored easily with the jobs however. We always made him do jobs for pocket money etc, as I was bought up fairly strictly I guess.

What do we do? We know where he's staying. Should we continue to tough it out, or go around and drag him out kicking and screaming, actually that would be hard he's 6 foot 2 and bigger than me :-). What other strategies are there to try to get him on the right path again. I get the feeling he thinks he was causing us some money problems, and this is helping us. (I don't know how he can't afford the car payments any more) I could sell the car as it's in my name and still half the money owing to me, but this will just enable his unemployment situation with a lack of transport. In fact he has suggested to sell the car, it wouldn't worry him. His attitude is "I'm living the life that I want to."

Sorry for the size of this Email, but in a way it only scrapes the surface.

Best Regards .... G.

.....

Hi G.,

It sounds like you may be experiencing Empty Nest Syndrome, which refers to feelings of depression, sadness, and/or grief experienced by moms & dads after teens come of age and leave their childhood homes. Women are more likely than men to be affected; often, when the nest is emptying, mothers are going through other significant life events as well, such as menopause or caring for elderly parents. Yet this doesn't mean that men are completely immune to Empty Nest Syndrome. Men can experience similar feelings of loss regarding the departure of their teens.

#### THOSE MOST AT RISK FOR THE EMPTY NEST:

1. Full-time parents.
2. Those who struggle with menopause, retirement, and aging parents.
3. Those who feel their child is not ready to leave home.
4. Those who have difficulty with separation and change.
5. Those who feel their child will be in "harm's way" while out in the "real world."

There are practical steps you can take to help you feel better:

- Buy some pay-as-you-go mobile phone vouchers or prepaid calling cards for your son so that keeping in contact is financially viable.
- Explore alternatives, such as spending some time with a relative or taking part in a supervised summer work project. Discuss other options, such as spending several weekends away instead of the same number of days in a row.
- Help you're your plan his time away from home. This gives him the message that you have faith in his maturity—something most adolescents are desperate to hear. It also helps you ensure that his plans are reasonable and safe.
- Make care packages for your son with anything from groceries to a set of towels for his apartment (or wherever he resides). Try not to overdo it in the beginning, and don't attach any strings to the gifts.
- Renew close relationships, such as those with spouses, partners, other family members, and friends.
- Send your son brief e-mails of what's happening at home.
- Stay in close touch with the people your son will stay with. Explain any special concerns you may have. If the stay is for more than a few days, agree on ways to communicate regularly with your son.
- Time and energy that you directed toward your son can now be spent on different areas of your life. This might be an opportune time to explore or return to hobbies, leisure activities, or career pursuits. Realize that a loss can actually be a gain.
- Try to schedule a weekly chat on the phone.
- Lastly – let go. Remember that the more resistant you are to your son's emotional

growth, the more of a struggle it will become. Some parents have a very difficult time giving their adolescents enough opportunities to make their own decisions. Being too restrictive can provoke the rebellious and possibly dangerous behaviors you're trying to avoid.

This marks a time to adjust to your new role in your son's life as well as changes in your identity as a parent. Your relationship with your son may become more peer-like, and you will have to get used to giving him his privacy.

Good luck,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:44AM (-07:00)

## How to Get Grown Children to Leave Home

Monday, April 13, 2009

The empty nest is no longer guaranteed for moms & dads of adult children. Statistics show adult children living at home is quite common. Moms & dads feel differently about such situations, but most agree getting the adult child to leave home takes some finesse. After all, you want to keep your relationships intact while gaining the freedom of the empty nest stage.

Step—

Look at the reasons the adult child is at home. There are plenty: finances because of a tough job market or economic setback; general malaise about moving on with life; divorce; personal problems and all of the above.

Step2—

Discuss ways of resolving the main issues with your partner. Money, counseling or tough love are all solutions depending on the situation and your abilities.

Step3—

Talk it over with the adult child. This is the first of several discussions, so do it in doses without laying out all your issues and setting a move-out date right away. Focus on the fact that it's time to leave, and ask for concerns or problems.

Step4—

Respond to concerns and problems with ideas, but empower the adult child to find solutions at the same time. This can be where you offer helping with finances—careful on this one—or finding an apartment, for example.

Step5—

Set a move-out date, and request a plan. Keep kindness and compassion in the tone, continue to offer help and support, if you can. But again, be firm that you expect the date to be honored.

Step6—

Make home less comfortable. Charge rent if you aren't already, add on prorated costs for

cable, Internet and phone services. No one wants to leave a great deal.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:47AM (-07:00)

## Child Emancipation in Canada...

Monday, April 13, 2009

Hi Mark,

My husband and I have not yet been able to implement the information from your sessions, as I had mentioned, our son is not living at home. We are trying to get him back, but he is living in a house with a bunch of kids who are influencing him in a bad way. My son is now talking about emancipation; he will be 16 years old in 2months. My husband and I will not agree to this. Anyways, if you have any insight or advice it would be appreciated.

Regards,

A.

.....

Emancipation varies between provinces:

Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and PEI is 18.

BC, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Yukon, Nunavut, Newfoundland and Labrador and NW territories is 19.

I don't think he can get it done even with your permission since he's only 16.

In any event, running away is not considered as a crime in Canada.

Out of the 60,360 reported missing children in Canada in 1999, 47,585 were runaways (78 %). British Columbia had the highest number of runaways, with 14,999 cases, followed by Ontario with 12,290.

Youth runaway for many reasons, including to rebel, assert their independence or to flee an environment of abuse. The Webster dictionary defines runaway as to leave quickly to avoid or escape something. Most of the time, youth believe running away is the best solution to a seemingly unbearable situation. According to many experts, running away is not part of an adolescent's normal development.

A definition of runaway is given by the Missing Children's Registry :

A runaway is a person under the age of 18 who flees home for an indefinite time. Generally speaking, the child leaves voluntarily without the permission of the parent or guardian.



social classes, often come from dysfunctional families, depressive and tend to have problems in school.

I'd say the hands of Canadian parents are pretty well tied when it comes to teen run-aways.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 04:52PM (-07:00)

## My kids have been resistant and overindulged for so long...

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Thanks Mark for the advice. I am constantly reading all the information in relation to session 1. I have first made a commitment to myself to self care and protect myself. My kids have been resistant and overindulged for so long that I don't want to start something and then not follow through. I am on holidays at the moment so I am in the process of taking care of myself but also developing positive contact with my kids. we recently bought a table tennis table and boy that has been a great investment ...getting along positively with each other and surprisingly enough reduces conflict and I get to teach them qualities such as good sportsmanship, they are improving and so is our relationship. I love all the stuff in your Ebook and sessions and looking forward to making changes. Just using my poker face as resulted in less conflict in the house ...but they are resistant little buggers and your PowerPoint on resistant children was very useful. I am so thankful for your website...

MyOutOfControlTeen.com

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:24AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Body Piercings

Wednesday, April 15, 2009



Mark,

Could you please give me some advice on how to deal with my 14 year old daughter who continues to pierce herself. She has already pierced her own belly button, and then about 3 weeks ago pierced the top of her hand, Now today she self pierced her lip. I told her to take it out or she would be

grounded from her cell phone. She did eventually take it out, but I need to know to better deal with this.

.....

Body piercings (not tattoos though) fall into the "pick-your-battles-carefully" category. I'm sure you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about a piercing. Save your energy for the more important issues. A body piercing is not really a behavioral issue per say (such as

skipping school, violating curfew, drinking alcohol, etc.). As long as it is not done excessively (we can talk about what would be excessive some other time), a piercing should be allowed for a 14-year-old -- but it should be earned!

I know you can have the child take the ring or stud out of their skin – but this does not stop them from getting a piercing in the first place (they just don't wear it when they are around the parent).

Don't get into a power struggle that you cannot win.

Why permit a piercing but not a tattoo?

A child can simply remove the ring or stud if she does not want to wear it anymore (the scar heals up). But a tattoo is permanent. If a child wants a tattoo, she can get one when she turns 18.

My Out-of-Control Daughter

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:33AM (-07:00)

## It is slowly working...

Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Thank you Mark.

Just knowing that I can ask you questions and get a response is really helping me through this difficult time.

My son only doesn't want to do chores because he hasn't needed to as I did everything for him in the past. However when he complains I explain that I made a mistake, - I thought he was still young and forgot he is growing up and that at 14 it is time to learn to do things for himself. It is slowly working as he unpacked his weekend table tennis bag instead of emptying it upside down.

Many many thanks.

Kind regards.

M.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:18AM (-07:00)

## Oppositional Defiant Behavior & Genetics

Thursday, April 16, 2009

Hi Mark

Thank you for your parenting therapy online workshop. I have found it extremely useful, at the moment I am still on assignment one, but it has made a great difference to how I think about things and how I handle situations with my son, C\_\_\_.

The peculiar thing is that when I did the over indulgent parent quiz with regards to my 15 year old son, I scored 89 out of 100, a really high over indulgent mark, which was not good! Out of interest, I then completed it on how my husband (my son's stepfather of 10 years) and I had been with my daughter when she was 15, (she is now 22). That time I had scored 59 which was exactly where the quiz stated we should be aiming for.

Amazingly, or I guess not so amazingly, she was a grade A student, we never had any problems with her, she doesn't smoke or drink particularly as she doesn't like it much. She has also never taken drugs and has never committed a crime. She has a good J\_\_\_b and is studying to be an accountant, plus she is buying her own flat.

I feel that we brought them up the same, but my son has always been shall we say 'a little devil'. But if I had done the test when he was 12 then the score would probably have been around 59 for him. But when he hit 13, he was misbehaving at school, then he started running off over night and we wouldn't know where he was. So gradually things started to spiral out of control with him. He smashed my husband's car window, and at the beginning of this year, he smashed up his bedroom badly and part of our kitchen, he also went for my husband with a knife, and they have always had a good relationship up to now. The police were called and he ended up going to court.

Things have settled down again but we do have the Youth Justice Services involved with C\_\_\_ and we have been to parent groups for help and support with him.

We have never indulged him with material things in the past, and I never ever imagined him coming home whenever he wanted, J\_\_\_, my daughter used to be in at 10.30 p.m. But because we found with him, if we had said to him be home at that time, he would just have not come home, consequently we found by letting him stay out later, he did at least come home.

He feels that he doesn't want to be controlled. We don't want out home smashed up again, so he comes and goes as he wants, but when he was younger he never had this freedom. He drinks, takes drugs (ecstasy) when he goes out partying.

In one of the chapters on self reliance, you mention him earning his money, which I agree with. A few months ago he was saying he can't wait to hit 16, then he could get a weekend J\_\_\_b, he's still a student at the moment. Now, he's found he can make more money by committing crime. So now he won't work, and if he wants to go ice skating for example, he doesn't ask for money, but we tend to give him some so that he's not doing any wrong doing. I would like him to stay away from the people he's hanging out with, but I know it's not all down to them. Frankly, I know what my son is like, I told a friend the other day, that if I had had a good son I wouldn't have wanted him hanging around with a boy like him.

But part of me wonders, is there any hope? Is some of it down simply to genetics? His father was a bad sort, been in prison and generally not very nice, taking drugs, committing all sorts of crime. He never saw C\_\_\_ for a few years as C\_\_\_ decided at ten he was fed up being let down by him and didn't want to see him. Shortly after this, his dad went to prison. C\_\_\_ decided to start seeing his dad last year, but they had a big argument and he doesn't want to bother with him now. But my son has the same hot bad temper that his dad has, and more and more I have started noticing that when you look at kids and their parents, genetics of their personalities has a lot to do with it. It scares me at

times, because even though he didn't have much to do with his dad, he is so alike, plus that has probably contributed to my feeling scared of my son when he's aggressive, because his dad used that same aggression on me but physically. At least my son has always said that he would never hit a woman.

But I want to know, do you really think when there is hope, my son evens says its his bad blood in him, because his father also told him about my son's uncle, who also is a very bad person, in prison, hitting women etc. My son seems to think that he can't help it now more or less, he doesn't seem to care about anything or anyone. This was a boy who would do charity runs with me, and raise money for third world countries. He would never have sworn at me once, now if he's been drinking, twice he has on the phone been so verbally rude to me, calling me a f...ing c..t

I used to feel resentful, because I used to love being a mum, I was always very involved, on the PTA, taking them out for trips, helping with homework, cooking with them, I even did childminding so I could be around them. I loved it. But he has made me hate it at times now. I remember years ago, a woman saying to me "if I had my time again, I wouldn't have kids." I was so shocked I had never ever had that thought. But now when my son is so horrible to me, or aggressive, or constantly in trouble, he has been to court now 6 times in 5 months, I just think how good my life would have been if I had only had my daughter. It used to make me feel so sad, and I would try and keep that thought in my head, but now I can easily write it. I used to resent him for making me feel that way. Now I am just accepting of the situation.

But that is where your therapy has helped, especially where it mentions that if you accept the situation for what it is you can then start to move forward, which I have done to a certain degree. I have also tried to not take it personally like you say to do and keep my 'poker' face.

Well sorry my email is so long, I just felt I needed to fill you in on a few details, but I would be especially interested to hear your views on the genetic side of things.

With thanks for your help.

S.

.....

Hi S.,

The exact cause of oppositional defiant behavior (ODB) is not known, but it is believed that a combination of biological, genetic and environmental factors may contribute to the condition.

Some studies suggest that defects in or injuries to certain areas of the brain can lead to serious behavioral problems in children. In addition, ODB has been linked to abnormal amounts of special chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters. Neurotransmitters help nerve cells in the brain communicate with each other. If these chemicals are out of balance or not working properly, messages may not make it through the brain correctly, leading to symptoms of ODB, and other mental illnesses. Further, many children and teens with ODB also have other mental illnesses, such as ADHD, learning disorders, depression or an anxiety disorder, which may contribute to their behavior problems.

Factors such as a dysfunctional family life, a family history of mental illnesses and/or substance abuse and inconsistent discipline by parents may contribute to the development of behavior disorders.

Many children and teens with ODB have close family members with mental illnesses, including mood disorders, anxiety disorders and personality disorders. This suggests that a vulnerability to develop ODB may be inherited.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:57AM (-07:00)

## Toddler Discipline

Friday, April 17, 2009



For a normal toddler, discipline problems may be easier to prevent than to deal with once they have started. A hungry, tired, off-schedule or starved-for-attention toddler is more likely to act up. Of course, very young children cannot be expected to behave all the time, but behavior problems can often be prevented and temper tantrums can be cut short when parents pay attention to their child's needs and refuse to reward bad behavior.

Young children thrive on routine. Once a baby progresses beyond the initial months and begins to sleep more during the night than during the day, having a set bedtime and a bedtime "ritual" is extremely helpful. For instance, a nightly bath or storytelling session helps calm the child down and signals that bedtime is near, which lessens the battles you'll have to face once it's time for the little one to go down into the crib. (And telling your toddler what comes next in the routine – such as "We'll have supper, and then you'll take your bath, and then it's pajama time" – also helps him or her prepare to learn about time and sequences of events.)

Not only the bedtime ritual, but also the amount of sleep once the little one is in the crib or toddler bed, is vital for preventing behavior problems. A 2-year-old who doesn't take a nap during the day can easily sleep for 12-13 hours at night; one who does nap needs less sleep at night, but only an hour or two less.

Paying enough attention to your child and making sure your toddler receives adequate stimulation during the time he or she is awake is also vitally important for avoiding bedtime showdowns. A child who attends (and enjoys) playgroup or preschool has a chance to exercise and socialize with other toddlers, and will often sleep well at night.

If your child stays at home with Mommy or Daddy all day, make sure to work in some exercise – whether it's a walk around the block or a session of silly dancing in the living room with the child's favorite music – and provide mental stimulation as well, by reading books or playing games together. The most important thing is to give the child undivided attention at some point so he or she will feel loved and secure enough to part from you at bedtime.

If your child is well-rested but is beginning to act up more than usual, make sure it hasn't been too long since his or her last meal or snack. Your toddler may be hungry without realizing it, and if this is the case, a healthy snack may be all that is needed.

Sometimes, however, you've done everything right and your child still has a temper tantrum. If you're at home and your child throws himself kicking and screaming on the floor because you stopped him from drawing on the walls, just walk away calmly and say that you'll come back when he stops screaming (or something to that effect). The important thing in dealing with a toddler tantrum is to remain calm and unflappable – so the child will soon see that his performance does not have its desired effect.

Other bad toddler behaviors, such as refusing to be buckled into the car seat or defying parental orders, require a different strategy. Try a bit of humor, if the situation allows. For instance, if your toddler has reached the boiling point because she doesn't want to put on her pajamas, offer to put them on the family dog or cat or Daddy instead – this silly suggestion may just give her the giggles long enough for you to squeeze her into the PJs. Or she might suddenly become very possessive of the PJs – “No, mine! I want to wear my pajamas myself!” Either way, you've won and the pajamas go on without tears.

If the child is behaving badly because he's overtired, keep in mind that he's having a very hard time controlling himself. Keep your own calm, as difficult as that may be, and talk to him quietly until he calms down – or put him down for a nap in a quiet room if you are unable to calm him. He may cry for a while, but he has most likely reached his threshold of stimulation and nothing you say will help the situation; sleep is what he needs and he will eventually calm himself down.

Deciding whether or not to spank your child is a very personal matter, and one that also depends on your family, the child, and her response to gentler forms of punishment. No matter which punishment you choose – whether spanking, scolding or time-outs – it is absolutely vital that you administer the punishment calmly and with love. Make it clear that you don't enjoy punishing the child and you would rather reward her for good behavior. Tell her you know she's a good child who just needs to act better. And finally, remember that the toddler years, as difficult as they are, don't last forever – and you may just miss them when they're gone!

The following lists out some ways for toddler discipline:

**Time OUT.** This is one of the most common toddler discipline method. Keep the time brief around one minute per year of age. Toddlers don't usually stay in the corner so it means stopping what you are doing and standing over them with your side or back to them so that they can't engage your facial/body language. Once time out is over, you can remind them what they did wrong in very simple language and then if they do it again (as most toddlers will immediately do upon being released from time out until they have the concept) they go back into the corner. Discipline must occur at the time of the action and not an hour or longer after. So even if you are out of your home, you must be prepared to discipline them. Be discreet, and remember always NOT to do it in front of others to avoid bringing down his self-esteem. Remind toddlers of the rules frequently when out on an outing or in the house if necessary.

**Distract and divert.** The best form of toddler discipline is redirection. First, you have to distract them from their original intention and then, quickly divert them toward a safer alternative. Give them something else to do for example, helping with the household

chores and soon they will be enjoying themselves rather than investing a lot of emotional energy into the original plan.

Ignoring temper tantrum. Ignoring the behavior or making statements such as when you throw a tantrum I can't hear you or I don't like watching temper tantrums so let me know when you are finished and we will talk, will both show and tell the child that their display of temper tantrums will not gain them control over the situation or the parent.

Temper tantrums are usually dramatic, intense and full of emotion. With a little practice and persistence, parents can learn how to stop the drama of a temper tantrum and change the situation to a calm, quiet discussion. Keep control and keep the peace.

Encourage cooperation. Your child is more likely to do what you say if you use soft approaches like these: - Ask rather than tell. Say "Would you give me the book, please?" instead of demanding "Bring me the book."

Set Limits. Much of your toddler discipline depends upon your ability to set limits. Boundaries provide security for the child whose adventurous spirit leads him to explore, but his inexperience may lead him astray. For example, your toddler doesn't want to hold your hand as you cross a street or parking lot together. You firmly set a limit: street or parking lot crossing is only done while holding hands. There is no option. We need to achieve the right balance between freedom and constraints for our toddlers.

Limit-setting teaches a valuable lesson for life: the world is full of yeses and nos. You decide what behavior you cannot allow and stick to that limit. This will be different for each family and each stage of development. Toddlers want someone to set limits. It makes them feel secure and loved, and helps them to understand boundaries. As a parent you have to ensure that the rules you set are simple, easy to understand, and consistent.

Provide structure. Set up conditions for toddler discipline that encourages desirable behavior to happen. Structure protects and redirects. You free the child to be a child and provide the opportunity to grow and mature. Structure creates a positive environment for the child. By a bit of preplanning you remove most of the "no's" so that a generally "yes" environment prevails.

Structure changes as the child grows. At all developmental levels restructuring the child's environment is one of your most valuable discipline strategies. When your infant reaches the grabby stage, you are careful to set your coffee cup out of his reach. When your toddler discovers the toilet, you start keeping the lid latched or the bathroom door closed. The preschooler who fights going to sleep at night gets a relaxing bedtime routine. The nine-year-old struggling to keep up with her homework gets a quiet, enticing place to work in, as well as firm restrictions on school-night television. Structure sets the stage for desirable behaviors to override undesirable ones.

Positive reinforcement. Studies show that toddler discipline using positive reinforcement works far better than punishment. Rather than focusing only on those things that irritate us and becoming habitual scolders, "catch your kids doing something right and reward them."

Remember that toddlers tune out a lot so if you are always saying "No", "Don't touch this", "Don't go there", then all they hear is NO. You want to try and give them lots of

positive feedback. Examples of positive feedback are to let them know they did a 'nice job following directions' or 'good job playing', with lots of hugs and kisses. Try using other "No" words like stop. You don't need to yell but you do need to put firmness 'don't mess with me' tone in your voice.

There is certainly no magic formula to toddler discipline but it is imperative that you establish the guidelines for behavior in your house as quickly as possible.

Whatever you do, make sure you are consistent in your toddler discipline. If you tell a child no and then eventually end up letting the child do what he wanted in the first place, you are setting yourself up for disaster. Even if you have changed your mind and decided that what the child was doing wasn't so bad after all, you need to stick to your decision and let the child know that you mean what you say. If he gets his way after a minute or after an hour, he will know he's got you pegged. As such, the key to toddler discipline is consistency!

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:09AM (-07:00)

## The Worst Mistake That Parents Make

Friday, April 17, 2009

Don't try to resolve a dozen child-behavior problems at once. Here's a great example of what I'm talking about (email from parent):

Our out of control daughter that is 16 years of age has been grounded for numerous reasons over the past two years. There have been periods of time in the two years that she has not been grounded although these times are not for very long. Some of the things that we have been dealing with are as follows:

Sex (suspect once in 07) ( now, since September 08) still seeing boyfriend at school.  
HAVING PROBLEMS COMING UP WITH CONSEQUENCES

Drug use (Marijuana)( first time not sure, but first time found "potato head" pipe in room  
April 09) HAVING PROBLEMS HERE TO

Retail Theft (Jan 09) (she paid fines and is attending theft class this weekend for it. We added an additional com service for church until end of school.)

Theft at her place of work ( Dec 08) she paid for it(her \$), made amends and did 24 hours community service. (She seems sorry but still don't trust her

Back talk (getting worse in 08 - 09) HAVEN'T ADRESSED THIS YET, well we have, but very badly apparently

Cutting (1st time with boy friend may of 07) got counseling and body checks thereafter, seemed to go away) she seemed healthier after break up with boy friend may of 07)caution

Attempted running away (twice in 07 )let go of this one too



Talk of suicide ( mostly in 07 – 08) let go with caution

Alcohol use (dabbled since 07) spot checks started and continue now and then ever since but let go with caution

Failing grades in school (since 07) WE ARE LETTING GO

Skipping school (once in 07) WILL BE TRUENT NEXT TIME, DON'T THINK SHE WILL DO IT AGAIN

Cigarette smoking (started in 07, got worse) WE LET GO OF THIS ONE

Lying (since she turned 12 and has gotten worse over time) HAVING PROBLEMS HERE TO

Trust is a big issue!!!

Present boyfriend is also doing drugs.

HELP!!! What can we do?

When parents chase their tails trying to find solutions to multiple problems at once, they become so scattered and confused that their ability to problem solve is greatly reduced.

==> PICK YOUR BATTLES CAREFULLY -- but perhaps more importantly -- PICK THEM ONE AT A TIME !

Here's the good news:

Let's say you have 10 behavior problems that your child is exhibiting. If you will tackle the most pressing issue first (first things first - and keep it simple), then you can move onto the second issue with a lighter load on your back. And by the time you get to issue number 3 or 4...

...you will find that issues 5 through 10 have taken care of themselves !!!

HELLO... Did you get it?!

Let me say it again:

By the time you get to issue number 3 or 4, issues 5 through 10 will have taken care of themselves.

So you see, when you try to fight 10 battles at once, you (a) fight all 10 and (b) run a huge risk of not solving even one of them.

On the other hand, when you only fight 1 battle at a time, you end up only fighting 3 to 4 total -- not 10.

Here's to working smarter rather than harder,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:10AM (-07:00)

## Assertive Parenting

Monday, April 20, 2009

Hi Mark,

In your article about Permissive Parenting under the conditional permissiveness I am confused---as you have said to make the kids EARN EVERYTHING---yet in this article it sounds like that is Conditional permissiveness and that is supposed to be a bad thing? Can you help me clear that up please? Thanks.

.....

Conditional parenting is not assertive parenting. Assertive parents:

- Say No
- Have a detailed Plan for Consequences
- Are Honest with their Children
- Structure Children's Behavior
- Foster Self-Esteem
- Manage Parental Stress
- and Exercise Parental Leadership

With Conditionally Permissive Parenting:

- Parental demands are usually not explicit or spelled out in detail
- Freedom and material benefits are often given in return for behavior that reflects well on the family (parent's ulterior motives or hidden agenda), such as making good grades or buttering up Aunt Sophie
- Moms & dads tend to see the adolescents as mini-adults.

Prospective moms & dads often don't realize that parenting is a twenty-year plus commitment, demanding their best efforts even at those times when everyone is tired. Acting with care is close to impossible in such everyday situations. Be proactive by learning to say no, use humor, carry out consequences, be honest, foster self-esteem, manage parental stress, and exercise parental leadership. Assertive communication is often avoided because moms & dads fear aggression, yet it usually prevents hostilities.

Be Honest with Kids—Don't lie to a youngster or promise what isn't in your power to deliver. Telling a youngster that the sun will be shining for a picnic is folly at best, and can destroy your youngster's faith in your integrity. Promising that another youngster will like him or her is another dangerous parent trap, causing more distress in the long run. Being honest about life's struggles teaches kids to share feelings and deal with reality rather than deny or avoid it.

Exercise Parental Leadership—Stand up courageously and be counted as a parent, not a buddy. Young people are in need of clear, positive leadership. They already have plenty

of peers. Keep a journal of successes and challenges, and jot down strategies and solutions. Forgive yourself when you mess up. Visualize yourself as an assertive parent who can say no, use humor, calmly enforce consequences, be honest, encourage self-esteem, control parental stress, and exercise parental leadership. Assertive parenting can be both your finest joy and greatest challenge.

**Foster Self-Esteem**—Even your choice of rewards can help guide your kids into the comfort of assertiveness. When kids learn to feel proud of themselves, they have gained a life-long skill. Say, "Pat yourself on the back" to foster self-confidence. Do that more often than giving gifts and treats.

**Have a Plan for Consequences**—Think before speaking, and back up those words with firm, caring actions. Thinking through consequences can be done beforehand, when things are calm. Carrying out the consequences can be done in a matter of fact manner, expressing faith in the youngster's ability to come out ahead in the end. This allows the youngster to feel a sense of family as opposed to being at odds with the moms & dads.

**It's OK to Say No**—It is sometimes believed that saying no too often can squelch a youngster's self-esteem, creativity, or confidence, yet the opposite is more often the case. There isn't any need for apology or guilt when "no" is needed. One of the most common pitfalls moms & dads suffer is inexactness of language. When one means for a youngster to do something direct by telling, not asking. Adults don't have to be mean, just clear.

**Manage Parental Stress**—Do what you can to reduce stress by dealing with temper. Deal with your own feelings on a regular basis so you can keep an even disposition with kids. Keep the number of issues to be corrected close to one -- too many can cause confusion and frustration. Develop a poor memory for the bad times and a great memory for the good times.

**Structure Kid's Behavior**—It is far better to tell a youngster clearly what is expected. Structure builds awareness and confidence in one's behavior. Teaching manners and social skills positions a youngster for social success and becoming an assertive adult.

**Use Humor**—Remember to carry the emotional first-aid kit of humor at all times. It will help the whole family through the rough spots of daily life. Moms & dads can model the skill of not taking things too seriously. Educators suggest that modeling is one of the most effective methods of teaching.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:07AM (-07:00)

## Following the "Fighting Fair" strategies...

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Dear Mark,

It has been a very progressive few days. My husband and I are following the "Fighting Fair" strategies and are making headway. It was wonderful to see my daughter go straight to the dishes and do them moments -- not hours, but moments -- after I

expressed what I wanted from her in an assertive, loving way. I was in amazement, mostly because I felt I accomplished something I should have been doing for years. I showed her respect in what I asked her to do and she is showing us respect in return. She also opened up about several issues she hadn't talked about for years. This is truly a small miracle. Thank you, and God Bless you Mark in your service to parents.

K.N.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:23AM (-07:00)

## I am the mother of a sexually abused child...

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Hello, I am the mother of a sexually abused child as well as a survivor of childhood and martial abuse. I am a soon to be author of a book called Shadows of Silence: A book about abuse. My concern for others and my inability to access resources caused me much unnecessary stress. In fact it was the key to persuade me to create my book. My heart tells me that my work will eliminate some of the hardships that I embraced for others in the future. If we wish to reduce the numbers in the victim population, it is crucial that we work together to make our world safer for the vulnerable people in our society. My role in making a difference is to make others aware of who is doing and offering what, in regards to education, prevention, and offering assistance to those with the potential of becoming a victim or who have unfortunately already became one. I believe you and I have the same goal in mind, which is to make a difference. I have watched your video, it's great. What you have on your site is great and I am sure it is a fantastic program.

I had a daughter who put me threw the wringer, so o to speak. I wish I would have known about you when I had my problems.

I am contacting you for permission to provide the information following this letter in an effort to help others parents. I believe what you are offering is great and will be of assistance to parents in trouble with their teens.

If you agree feel free to add or delete from the information below.

I am pleased and happy to say that the response that I have received from, survivors, counselors, and organizations has been great. I wish to thank you in advance for your consideration in making this important written contribution to my book. I certainly appreciate it and it will no doubt help others who are open to reading it.

If all goes well, my book will be published in the next four months. I assume it will receive a sufficient amount of exposure, due to contacts I have maintained in different parts of the world. I look forward to your response and it is my hope that you will be take part in this endeavour. If you need more information about my book I can send you the letters of recommendations that I have received from police officers, Mental Health Department, and an editor of a newspaper. Respectfully Sherry-Lynn Clyburn

**OPS, My Out-of-Control Teen Cell: (765) 810.3319 or Toll Free: (856) 457.4883 Website: <http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com> E-mail: [mbhutton@gmail.com](mailto:mbhutton@gmail.com)** Are you concerned that your child is:

vHaving unprotected sex? vHanging with the wrong crowd? vExperimenting with drugs or alcohol?

Has your child:

vLied to you? \* vStolen from you? vSkipped school? vDestroyed property? vRan away from home? vHad a brush with the law? vRefused to follow any rules? vStayed out at night without permission? If so, then I hope you download My Out-Of-Control Teen eBook

and join Online Parent Support today. Online Parent Support (OPS) is a program designed specifically for parents of strong-willed or out-of-control adolescent children. OPS provides the practical and emotional support for parents who need to change destructive adolescent behavior. OPS is divided into 4 - 90 minutes each session and it includes:

- Live Audio Recordings of the entire parent-program I conduct at Madison Superior Court, Div. 2
- Power Point Presentations and Videos shown during the program (plus dozens of additional videos on everything from ADHD to Wilderness Programs)
- OPS Website -- updated daily with many additional parenting resources
- OPS Bonus eBooks Site -- I obtain re-distribution rights to other parenting eBooks and offer them FOR FREE to members of OPS; currently there are 44 additional eBooks for download
- Parent Forum -- where members of OPS support and seek advice from one another; meet and talk (via forum or chat) to married and single parents who are experiencing the same parent-child difficulties as you
- OPS Bi-Weekly Newsletter -- provides additional resources for parenting today's teens and pre-teens
- Access to me via phone, email, or OPS Chat Room -- always feel free to contact me as often as needed while you begin to implement your new parenting strategies

The curriculum teaches concrete prevention, identification, and intervention strategies for the *most* destructive of adolescent behaviors. Parents cycle through programming quickly, thus reducing the length of time that (a) effective solutions in parenting are implemented and (b) resultant positive change in adolescent behavior is experienced.

**Why an E-book rather than a regular book?** "We wanted the book to be digital (i.e., an eBook) so that parents could down-load it instantly – no waiting for shipment. Most parents who are struggling with their child's behavior problems need answers immediately rather than in 3 to 10 days. Parents do not have to wait for a physical product (e.g., a book) to be shipped to their homes. Instead, they can begin programming within a matter of a few minutes." In this book, I share over 150 proven techniques to use with your strong-willed, out-of-control teenager. If parents don't have these techniques, all they are left with are conventional parenting techniques. And as they may have discovered, conventional techniques don't work with unconventional teenagers." Come to my site for more information as well as to watch one of my video's, to learn more about my eBook, and the program I am offering.

**A brief biography by Mark Hutten, M.A.**<http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/bio.html>

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:17AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Curfew Violation

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

My daughter is having great difficulty getting in by curfew. She always says things like, "It's so unfair! All my friends get to stay out later than I do. I don't need a curfew. Just call me on the cell when I need to come home. Don't you trust me?"

Any advice?

Aussie mom



Setting a curfew is pretty easy when your kids are little, but it gets harder and harder as they mature. You have less control over their lives and they can get around on their own, particularly when they begin driving. But while kids certainly need more independence as they grow up, giving kids structure is also vitally important to their growth and development and, just as importantly, it helps keep them safe.

Only 48 percent of adolescents surveyed indicate that their family has clearly defined boundaries, which includes having clear rules and consequences and having parents that monitor their whereabouts.

Girls are more likely than boys to say that their parents keep track of their whereabouts. A full 86 percent of girls and 77 percent of boys say their parents ask where they are going and who they will be with most or all of the time.

Setting (and enforcing) clear, fair, and firm boundaries—and following through with consequences—is a critical part of being a good parent. It is most effective, though, when the boundaries are balanced by a warm, caring relationship with your kids, which includes their participation in the decision-making process.

Making young people part of the curfew discussion and establishing clear expectations and consequences gives them some of the independence they are looking for while still maintaining the boundaries they need to thrive.

#### Suggestions:

**Adjust** — Review and negotiate curfews together. There are exceptions to every rule, so it may be appropriate from time to time to change a curfew (such as during the summer or to allow your kids to participate in a positive activity at school or in the community).

**Affirm** — Tell your kids how much you appreciate it when they tell you where they will be and when they arrive home on time. This positive feedback will make it more likely that they will continue to respect the boundaries that you have set together.

**Be Realistic** — There is no “magic” curfew time for all kids. Match curfews to the needs of your family, your kids, and your community. Some kids need more sleep than others. Some communities are safer than others. Negotiate curfews that work for you, your child, and your family, and adhere to local laws.

**Confirm the Plans** — Before they head out the door, find out where your kids are going, whom they will be with, how they will be getting to where they are going and back, and when they plan to be home.

**Enforce** — Be consistent when enforcing consequences, but when boundaries are broken, do not give the impression that your kids or adolescents have failed. Instead, use these situations to teach them about responsibility.

**Think Ahead** — Do not try to set curfews when your kids or adolescents are begging to

go out. Talk about expectations early and make sure that everyone understands what is expected. In addition, agree together on the consequences if curfew is broken.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:17AM (-07:00)

## Teens & Alcohol

Wednesday, April 29, 2009



Mark,

As a responsible, caring parent, I want my children to make responsible choices regarding alcohol use that are consistent with my beliefs and values. But it's not a simple issue. We have alcohol in our home and with meals, but don't want the kids to drink before they are adults. In the midst of these issues, our children see and hear numerous ads that promote alcohol. They may be curious, and—particularly as they grow older—face pressure from their peers to drink. How do you deal with this issue in a positive, healthy way?

T.C.

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By the time they graduate from high school, half of adolescents report consuming alcohol regularly. One-third report binge drinking. The greatest increase in alcohol usage occurs between grades 6 and 10. Good news: many young people do not consume alcohol. Fifty-five percent of middle and high school-aged students say that it is against their values to drink alcohol while they are adolescents.

Helping kids steer clear of alcohol involves more than simply warning them of the dangers (though that is important as well). It involves getting at the heart of asset-building to help them feel safe, supported, and free to talk about anything on their minds. And it involves building a strong relationship with your kids early and nurturing their personal values and skills to help them make smart decisions.

Suggestions:

Stay Involved—

- **Have a Plan** — As your adolescent gains more independence, negotiate a plan for what you will do if he or she is in a difficult alcohol-related situation. Make safety a top priority. Make sure your youngster knows that you will provide a “no-questions-asked-until-later” ride home from any party at which they feel uncomfortable.
- **Keep Your Youngster Involved** — Being active in youth clubs, school activities, religious activities and other caring environments with adult role models offers important reinforcements for your positive messages at home.
- **Monitor** — Keep track of where your adolescents go and who they are with. If they go to a party, check in advance whether an adult will be actively present and whether alcohol

will be available.

- **Set Consequences** — Be clear about any consequences of underage drinking before there is a problem. However, do not make the consequences so serious that your teen will not ask for help if they are in serious trouble or need a safe ride home.

**Communicate—**

- **Be Honest** — Be honest about your own alcohol use. If you drank as an adolescent, share why you believe it was a poor choice.
- **Be Proactive** — Do not just wait for your kids to bring up alcohol or drinking. Use news stories, ads, personal incidents, and other opportunities to raise the issue—before it becomes a crisis.
- **Share What You Believe** — Be clear about your values and expectations regarding alcohol use and why you hold those values and expectations.
- **Talk** — Maintain open and honest communication. Help your kids feel comfortable talking with you about important and difficult topics.

**Think About Community—**

- **Connect** — Talk with other moms & dads about your values and concerns. Discuss what you expect from your kids and encourage them to set boundaries with your kids when needed. If you are struggling with issues, ask them for advice and support.
- **Do Not Be Part of the Problem** — Never purchase alcohol for young people or provide alcohol to a party for adolescents, no matter what the occasion.

**Teach—**

- **Maintain Perspective** — If your kids try alcohol, address the issue directly, but do not assume that they are “beyond hope.” Use it as an opportunity to help them learn from mistakes. However, if the problems persist or become more serious, seek professional support and help.
- **Model** — Model restraint in your own life. If you drink, use moderation. If you or your partner struggles with alcohol use, seek professional help.
- **Teach** — Help your kids develop skills to resist pressure to use alcohol. Do this by giving them opportunities to make decisions and be responsible, starting when they are very young. Role play with your youngster to teach them how they can say no along with other options they have when they’re under pressure.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:31AM (-07:00)



# Teens & Peer Pressure

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Hi Mark,

I read your book about a year ago and have been referring back to it when I have needed it. My communication with my daughter has improved greatly. Unfortunately, she is still making bad choices. As far as I know, it is only occasionally, but could be more and I am just not aware of it. A few months ago we pulled her out of traditional school and enrolled her in Independent Studies. She goes to school (which is a class at her regular school) once a week, receives work, checks in her homework and takes her tests. Her grades and homework have improved significantly. When I took her to school on Monday, I was supposed to pick her up around 10-11, she was supposed to call (she had her cell phone taken away at the time.) I called the teacher around 12 and she informed me she had checked out at 11:30. To make a long story short, she finally called me at 3:00 (I was at the school looking for her) and was there. I did not talk to her because I was too angry. She proceeded to come home, eat one thing after another for over an hour then went up stairs to bed. I told her Dad he needed to drug test her (we are divorced.) He called last night and said when he told her she needed to take the test, she admitted to smoking pot a few weeks ago. My problem is her low self esteem and wanting to fit in. She was on the school volleyball team until she got kicked off for bad grades. I have offered for her to do ANY other activity and she refuses. It seems she only wants to fit in doing bad things, which I assume makes her feel "cool." How do I get her to do things that are positive when she only WANTS to do destructive things?

Thanks!

W.

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Hi W.,

Peer pressure is more than just a phase that adolescents go through. Whether it leads to extreme hair and clothing, tattoos, or body piercing, peer pressure is a powerful reality and many adults do not realize its effects. It can be a negative force in the lives of kids and adolescents, often resulting in their experimenting with tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs.

Adolescents want to be with people their own age. Kids, especially during adolescence, begin to spend a lot more time with their friends, and less time with their family. This makes them more susceptible to the influences of their peers. It is important to remember that teenage friends can have a positive influence on a youth. During teenage years, adolescents are more accepting of their peers feelings and thoughts. Peers can and do act as positive role models.

Parents, teachers, and other adults should encourage adolescents to find friends that have similar interests and views as you a parent, educator, religious and community leader are trying to develop in the teen. The critical adult views including doing well in school, having respect for others, avoiding drug use, smoking, drinking and other risky

behaviors.

Adolescents put into practice risk-taking behaviors as they are trying to find their own identity and become more independent. This makes them very vulnerable to experimenting or becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol, sexual activity, and defiance of authority, especially if there is peer pressure to do so. Adolescents who use drugs are also more likely to become involved in gang activity, have low self-esteem, behavior problems, school performance problems, and depression.

Parents, teachers, religious and community leaders want to promote positive peer pressure among teens. Parents and other adults often believe that adolescents do not value their opinions. In reality, studies suggest that parents have tremendous influence over their kids, especially adolescents. No matter the age of their kids, parents, caregivers and other adult role models should never feel helpless about countering the negative effects of peer pressure.

What parents can do:

- Ask questions and enjoy listening to adolescents as he or she talks
- Avoid attacking the teen's friends- criticizing an adolescents choice of friend can be perceived by a teen as a personal attack
- Avoid criticism that takes the form of ridicule or shame
- Be an involved parent
- Establish and maintain good communications
- Get adolescents involved in youth groups, community activities and peer monitoring programs
- Help the teen understand the difference between image (expressions of youth culture) and identity (who he or she is)
- Monitor your teen's activities
- Nurture strong self-esteem
- Role-play peer pressure situations
- Talk openly and honestly about stealing, alcohol, illegal drugs, and sex

Peer pressure during childhood and adolescence equips adolescents to develop healthy friendships, self-identity, self-esteem, and self-reliance. It is healthy for everyone to talk about how they feel what they need, desire and want. Parents mistakenly assume that their teen does not want to talk to them, but it may just be that the teenager does not want to talk about his or her bad grades, their bad behavior and how much trouble they are in. Usually adolescents are more willing to talk about something they are interested in or something positive that is about them.

Develop a habit of talking with your teen every day. Building a strong close open relationship with him or her while they are young will make it easier for your teen to discuss problems, concerns and other sensitive issues associated with school, relationships, and other life stressors.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:28AM (-07:00)

# 18-year-old scared before signing record deal...

Friday, May 01, 2009

Mark,

It was a pleasure speaking with you this afternoon. My name is F\_\_\_. I am a record producer/recording engineer based out of the San Francisco Bay Area. I have been in the music business since I was a 19-year-old sophomore at U.C. Berkeley in 1978. I am presently 49, so I have been part of the music scene for a very long time. Several months ago, I purchased the MOOCT program because my 18-year-old daughter, A\_\_\_, is in crisis (for lack of a better term).

A\_\_\_ was born August 17, 1990. She has always lived with her mother, D\_\_\_, in Texas. I was never married to A\_\_\_'s mother. Musically speaking, A\_\_\_ is far ahead of where my musical abilities were at age 18. She is a gifted singer and I have trained her well. At the age of 15, A\_\_\_ stated that it was her ambition to be a pop star and asked me to work with her. She had excelled at every level, winning many scholastic vocal competitions and singing in churches. I agreed to work with her. The process started in June 2006.

Under my direction A\_\_\_'s music career thrived. By January of this year she was established internationally and had proved that if she had a record deal she could generate substantial revenues. Malia Obama was one of A\_\_\_'s fans and we had discussions with the Obama people about A\_\_\_ performing for the Obama girls. In January, everything went haywire. I was negotiating a record deal for A\_\_\_ with Universal Music Group. I thought everything was going well but then neither A\_\_\_ or her mother would talk to me for almost 3 weeks. D\_\_\_ finally contacted me on February 9 and informed me that she had enrolled A\_\_\_ in a 9 month pharmacy technician training program at some cheesy Texas technical school. She said the reason she did it was so A\_\_\_ would have something to fall back on if her music career was a bust. That reasoning made no sense because A\_\_\_ and I had made an agreement long ago that in the unlikely event her music career was short lived she would go to a four year collage and I would pay for it. Her mother has always been in a state of financial hardship and constantly borrows money from anyone who will let her have it; me included. When I asked D\_\_\_ why she had enrolled A\_\_\_ in the tech school without discussing it with me first, she had two responses: "I don't know" and "I told A\_\_\_ many times that she needed to call you." They didn't discuss it with me because they knew I would have stopped them in their tracks.

D\_\_\_ took substantial grief from people associated with A\_\_\_'s career for doing something so stupid. A\_\_\_ knew her mom was catching major hell so when I finally got to speak with A\_\_\_ she said she didn't want to be a pop star anymore even though she knew she had the talent to be successful. She went on to say she just wanted to lead a quiet life and she thought she could get by on a \$10/hour pharmacy tech salary. This did not sound like my daughter in any way, shape or form. She sounded very confused. My position was she had no business in the tech school and I wanted her out of there immediately. She refused to quit. As a result, she lost her record deal with Universal, production team, songs written for her, \$500/month allowance I gave her and the new sports car she wanted me to buy her. Approximately 2 weeks after this bombshell was dropped on me A\_\_\_ told me she never wanted to work with me again. I was confused by this because I was under the impression she was done with music. She also stated that I was "too possessive."

Several days after that conversation, A\_\_\_ announced on the internet that she was done with pop music and planned to pursue a career as a Contemporary Christian Music recording artist. She also announced that she had a new manager, her mother, D\_\_\_. D\_\_\_'s management experience is limited to watching me work with A\_\_\_. D\_\_\_ is not qualified to manage any artist and readily admits it but she's doing it anyway. The executives at the Christian record companies laughed their asses off when they heard A\_\_\_ wants to be a Christian recording artist. After what has transpired they want no part of A\_\_\_ or D\_\_\_. Furthermore, the quality of A\_\_\_'s recordings have tanked since I stopped working with her. A Christian record label executive described A\_\_\_'s recent work to me as "unlistenable." I agree with his assessment.

I have tried numerous times to talk with A\_\_\_; she refuses to speak with me. She did send me a text message a few weeks ago in which she stated that she was really happy. It was a dig at me. My daughter is headed down a path that will not serve her well in the future. I feel like I've lost my daughter and that there is nothing I can do for her. Your statement in the program that kids won't change until they're ready reinforced my feeling that I should just let her go. It breaks my heart to see my precious daughter abandon her lifelong dreams to work in a low paying job and pursue a record deal in Christian music that can never materialize (for business reasons which are irrelevant to this correspondence). I have tried to help A\_\_\_ to become an independent young lady who can take care of herself someday and be financially self sufficient. She was on her way until something happened down in Texas that derailed her. It is only natural that an 18-year-old would be scared before signing a major record deal with a company like Universal. I think that is where this mess started and then A\_\_\_'s mother played on her fears. I could be wrong but that's what I believe happened.

Any insights that you can provide would greatly be appreciated. Thank you.

F.

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Hi F.,

Based on what you've said, a few comments seemed to jump out at me:

"They didn't discuss it with me because they knew I would have stopped them in their tracks."

"She also stated that I was "too possessive."

"It breaks my heart to see my precious daughter abandon her lifelong dreams to work in a low paying job and pursue a record deal in Christian music that can never materialize."

I'm guessing that you (a) have been a bit too controlling in the past and (b) viewed your daughter as an extension of yourself (i.e, you had YOUR goals for her that are clearly not in alignment with HER goals for her).

She probably was a bit apprehensive with the idea of becoming a "big star" -- that's true - - but the larger issue may be her wanting to assert her will rather than follow your will.

Hope this makes sense. I feel like I am at least in the ball park on this one.

I would drop her a line and simply say, "I will support you in whatever you want to do with your life. You know what's best for you. I love you for who you are."

Then in future conversations, inquire as to what she is doing without providing your opinion about it -- just listen!

You can do that,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:20AM (-07:00)

## Bullying Survival Tips

Friday, May 01, 2009



Our very immature 16 year old with ASD and anxiety is starting to retaliate to years of bullying and abuse at school. The other day he responded to a disgusting comment by one student by punching and kicking 5 students. He has also stood up to teachers refusing to co-operate. He does not believe he has done anything wrong and shows no remorse. What do we do?

.....

Every day thousands of adolescents wake up afraid to go to school. Bullying is a problem that affects millions of students, and it has everyone worried, not just the kids on its receiving end. Yet because moms & dads, teachers, and other adults don't always see it, they may not understand how extreme bullying can get.

Bullying is when a person is picked on over and over again by an individual or group with more power, either in terms of physical strength or social standing.

Two of the main reasons youngsters are bullied are because of appearance and social status. Trouble makers pick on the youngsters they think don't fit in, maybe because of how they look, how they act (for example, kids who are shy and withdrawn), their race or religion, or because the trouble makers think their target may be gay or lesbian.

Some trouble makers attack their targets physically, which can mean anything from shoving or tripping to punching or hitting, or even sexual assault. Others use psychological control or verbal insults to put themselves in charge. For example, youngsters in popular groups or cliques often bully youngsters they categorize as different by excluding them or gossiping about them (psychological bullying). They may also taunt or tease their targets (verbal bullying).

Verbal bullying can also involve sending cruel instant or email messages or even posting insults about a person on a website — practices that are known as cyber-bullying.

How Does Bullying Make Youngsters Feel?

One of the most painful aspects of bullying is that it is relentless. Most youngsters can take one episode of teasing or name calling or being shunned at the mall. However, when it goes on and on, bullying can put a person in a state of constant fear.

Boys and girls who are bullied may find their schoolwork and health suffering. Amber began having stomach pains and diarrhea and was diagnosed with a digestive condition called irritable bowel syndrome as a result of the stress that came from being bullied throughout ninth grade. Mafooz spent his afternoons hungry and unable to concentrate in class because he was too afraid to go to the school cafeteria at lunchtime.

Studies show that youngsters who are abused by their peers are at risk for mental health problems, such as low self-esteem, stress, depression, or anxiety. They may also think about suicide more.

Trouble makers are at risk for problems, too. Bullying is violence, and it often leads to more violent behavior as the bully grows up. It's estimated that 1 out of 4 elementary-school trouble makers will have a criminal record by the time they are 30. Some teen trouble makers end up being rejected by their peers and lose friendships as they grow older. Trouble makers may also fail in school and not have the career or relationship success that other youngsters enjoy.

#### Who bullies?

Both boys and girls can be trouble makers. Trouble makers may be outgoing and aggressive. Or a bully can appear reserved on the surface, but may try to manipulate youngsters in subtle, deceptive ways, like anonymously starting a damaging rumor just to see what happens.

Many trouble makers share some common characteristics. They like to dominate others and are generally focused on themselves. They often have poor social skills and poor social judgment. Sometimes they have no feelings of empathy or caring toward other youngsters.

Although most trouble makers think they're hot stuff and have the right to push youngsters around, others are actually insecure. They put other youngsters down to make themselves feel more interesting or powerful. And some trouble makers act the way they do because they've been hurt by trouble makers in the past — maybe even a bullying figure in their own family, like a parent or other adult.

Some trouble makers actually have personality disorders that don't allow them to understand normal social emotions like guilt, empathy, compassion, or remorse. These youngsters need help from a mental health professional like a psychiatrist or psychologist.

#### What Can You Do?

For younger kids, the best way to solve a bullying problem is to tell a trusted adult. For adolescents, though, the tell-an-adult approach depends on the bullying situation.

One situation in which it is vital to report bullying is if it threatens to lead to physical danger and harm. Numerous high-school students have died when stalking, threats, and

attacks went unreported and the silence gave the bully license to become more and more violent.

Sometimes the victim of repeated bullying cannot control the need for revenge and the situation becomes dangerous for everyone.

Adults in positions of authority — moms & dads, teachers, or coaches — can often find ways to resolve dangerous bullying problems without the bully ever learning how they found out about it.

If you're in a bullying situation that you think may escalate into physical violence, try to avoid being alone (and if you have a friend in this situation, spend as much time as you can together). Try to remain part of a group by walking home at the same time as other youngsters or by sticking close to friends or classmates during the times that the bullying takes place.

### Bullying Survival Tips

Here are some things you can do to combat psychological and verbal bullying. They're also good tips to share with a friend as a way to show your support:

- Don't get physical. However you choose to deal with a bully, don't use physical force (like kicking, hitting, or pushing). Not only are you showing your anger, you can never be sure what the bully will do in response. You are more likely to be hurt and get in to trouble if you use violence against a bully. You can stand up for yourself in other ways, such as gaining control of the situation by walking away or by being assertive in your actions. Some adults believe that bullying is a part of growing up (even that it is character building) and that hitting back is the only way to tackle the problem. But that's not the case. Aggressive responses tend to lead to more violence and more bullying for the victims.
- Find your (true) friends. If you've been bullied with rumors or gossip, all of the above tips (especially ignoring and not reacting) can apply. But take it one step further to help ease feelings of hurt and isolation. Find one or two true friends and confide how the gossip has hurt your feelings. Set the record straight by telling your friends quietly and confidently what's true and not true about you. Hearing a friend say, "I know the rumor's not true. I didn't pay attention to it," can help you realize that most of the time youngsters see gossip for what it is — petty, rude, and immature.
- Hold the anger. Who doesn't want to get really upset with a bully? But that's exactly the response he or she is trying to get. Trouble makers want to know they have control over your emotions. If you're in a situation where you have to deal with a bully and you can't walk away with poise, use humor — it can throw the bully off guard. Work out your anger in another way, such as through exercise or writing it down (make sure you tear up any letters or notes you write in anger).
- Ignore the bully and walk away. It's definitely not a coward's response — sometimes it can be harder than losing your temper. Trouble makers thrive on the reaction they get, and if you walk away, or ignore hurtful emails or instant messages, you're telling the bully that you just don't care. Sooner or later the bully will probably get bored with trying to bother you. Walk tall and hold your head high. Using this type of body language sends a message that you're not vulnerable.

- Practice confidence. Practice ways to respond to the bully verbally or through your behavior. Practice feeling good about yourself (even if you have to fake it at first).
- Take charge of your life. You can't control other youngster's actions, but you can stay true to yourself. Think about ways to feel your best — and your strongest — so that other kids may give up the teasing. Exercise is one way to feel strong and powerful. (It's a great mood lifter, too!) Learn a martial art or take a class like yoga. Another way to gain confidence is to hone your skills in something like chess, art, music, computers, or writing. Joining a class, club, or gym is a great way to make new friends and feel great about yourself. The confidence you gain will help you ignore the mean kids.
- Talk about it. It may help to talk to a guidance counselor, teacher, or friend — anyone who can give you the support you need. Talking can be a good outlet for the fears and frustrations that can build when you're being bullied.

### What If You're the Bully?

All of us have to deal with a lot of difficult situations and emotions. For some youngsters, when they're feeling stressed, angry, or frustrated, picking on someone else can be a quick escape — it takes the attention away from them and their problems. Some trouble makers learn from firsthand experience. Perhaps name-calling, putdowns, or physical force are the norms in their families. Whatever the reason, though, it's no excuse for being the bully.

If you find it hard to resist the temptation to bully, you might want to talk with someone you look up to. Try to think about how others feel when you tease or hurt them. If you have trouble figuring this out (many youngsters who bully do), you might ask someone else to help you think of the other person's side.

Bullying behavior backfires and makes everyone feel miserable — even the trouble makers. Youngsters might feel intimidated by trouble makers, but they don't respect them. If you would rather that youngsters see your strength and character — even look up to you as a leader — find a way to use your power for something positive rather than to put others down.

Do you really want youngsters to think of you as unkind, abusive, and mean? It's never too late to change, although changing a pattern of bullying might seem difficult at first. Ask an adult you respect for some mentoring or coaching on how you could change.

### Steps to Stop Bullying in Schools

If the environment at your school supports bullying, working to change it can help. For example, there may be areas where trouble makers harass youngsters, such as in stairwells or courtyards that are unobserved by staff. Because a lot of bullying takes part in the presence of peers (the bully wants to be recognized and feel powerful, after all), enlisting the help of friends or a group is a good way to change the culture and stand up to trouble makers.

You can try to talk to the bully. If you don't feel comfortable in a face-to-face discussion, leave a note in the bully's locker. Try to point out that his or her behavior is serious and harmful. This can work well in group situations, such as if you notice that a member of



your group has started to pick on or shun another member.

Most youngsters hesitate to speak out because it can be hard. It takes confidence to stand up to a bully — especially if he or she is one of the established group leaders. But chances are the other students witnessing the bullying behavior feel as uncomfortable as you do. They may just not be speaking up. Perhaps they feel that they're not popular enough to take a stand or worry that they're vulnerable and the bully will turn on them. Staying quiet (even though they don't like the bully's behavior) is a way to distance themselves from the person who is the target.

When a group of youngsters keeps quiet like this, the bully's reach is extending beyond just one person. He or she is managing to intimidate lots of youngsters. But when one person speaks out against a bully, the reverse happens. It gives others license to add their support and take a stand, too.

Another way to combat bullying is to join your school's anti-violence program or, if your school doesn't have one, to start one of your own.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:39AM (-07:00)

## He has suffered tremendous bullying and has had a number of breakdo...

Saturday, May 02, 2009

Hi J.,

**I've responded throughout your email below:**

Hi Mark

Firstly congratulations on a brilliant program. We are totally exhausted and confused with what to do with our child. We have been working on the program for a few months and feel that we need some fine tuning!

Our 16 year old son is ADHD and ASD. He has suffered tremendous bullying and has had a number of breakdowns.

**Please refer to the page on bullying:** <http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/mr-bully.html>

He also suffers from high level of anxiety...

**Successful short-term therapy can help to alleviate your child's fears and help your child return to healthy functioning. If you are unsure whether your child's fear is normal, or whether it is interfering in his life, it may be a good idea to consult with a psychologist to determine whether your child could benefit from treatment.**

**Cognitive-behavioral treatment is focused on teaching children and parents specific skills for changing their fearful thoughts, anxious, tense physical feelings, and avoidant behaviors. Other types of therapy are more focused on using play therapy techniques,**

using talk therapy techniques, etc. to produce change. There is much research evidence suggesting that cognitive-behavioral techniques are quite successful with reducing anxiety in children.

Although research has shown that anxiety may be heritable, there are many other ways that fears may be acquired. For example, your child may have a more anxious, inhibited temperament, which may make him more vulnerable to feeling anxious. Further, fears are often acquired through the media, through modeling from others, etc. Fears might also occur after children have experienced some form of trauma. So, although you may feel you are anxious, it is not likely that you simply could "give" an anxiety disorder to your child. There are ways that you may interact with your child, however, that may function to increase his or her anxiety. It is important to examine such factors.

Our fear is that he is playing us like a fiddle. Yes we acknowledge that he has had a rough time with the kids. He is very immature and an easy target. As a result teachers as well as us have been responsive and protective. Now we have a problem. He is out of control. The anger ladder is the story of his life!!! We have holes in the walls and he just screams us down whenever we ask him to do anything. He shows no remorse or belief that he has done anything wrong. He turns it back onto everyone else and constantly steals from us and lies, We take things away for 3 days then 7 and he just becomes so determined and stubborn.

I find that when parents continue to experience difficulties after 4 weeks, they have missed a couple important pieces.

Let's trouble shoot...

Below is a summary of all the assignments I gave you in the eBook. If parents do not implement most of these assignments, it is often the "kiss of failure."

For example, the transmission in your car has hundreds of parts, but if just one little tiny part is not working -- the whole transmission does not work. The same is true with this "parent program." Omit just one strategy, and the whole plan runs the risk of failing.

Check List--

Referring to the Online Version of the eBook:

1. Are you asking your son at least one question each day that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or a "no" to demonstrate that you are interested in what is going on in his life?
2. Are you saying to him "I love you" everyday and expecting nothing in return?
3. Are you eating dinner together at least one evening each week -- either at home or out?
4. Are you using the Fair Fighting technique as needed?
5. Do you use "The Art of Saying Yes" whenever your answer is yes?
6. Do you use "The Art of Saying No" whenever your answer is no?
7. Do you catch him in the act of doing something right at least once each day?
8. Do you use the "When You Want Something From Your Kid" approach as needed?
9. Are you using "The Six-Step Approach" when something unexpected pops-up?

10. Do you give him at least one chore each day?
11. Do you find something fun to do with him each week?
12. When you are undecided about what to say or do in any particular situation, are you asking yourself the following question: "Will this promote the development of self-reliance in my son, or will this inhibit the development of self-reliance?" If it is supportive of self-reliance, say it or do it. If it is not supportive, don't!
13. Is he EARNING ALL of his stuff and freedom? (see "Self-Reliance Cycle")?
14. Have you watched ALL the videos in the Online Version of the eBook?
15. Are you putting on your best poker face when "things are going wrong?"
16. And perhaps most importantly, are you doing things to take care of your mental and physical health?

If you answered "no" to any of the above, you are missing some important pieces to the puzzle. Most parents DO miss a few pieces initially -- you can't be expected to remember everything! But don't get frustrated and give up. We must be willing to hang in there for the long haul.

I'm talking about refinement here. Refinement is a necessary tool to use in order to truly be successful with these parenting strategies.

**HERE IS THE GOOD NEWS:** Parents who refine are, on average, 95% - 100% successful at getting the parent-child difficulties reduced in intensity and severity (i.e., the problems are easily managed).

The same can be true in your case. Continue to refine by emailing me as needed over the next few months. Refinement is a process, not a one-time event.

He has no friends... doesn't want them... doesn't need them! His sister has gone to university and when we asked if he missed her, his answer was that he now knew everything about computers and that he didn't need her anymore so therefore he didn't! It is like he just uses everyone.

Now we are having problems at school. The other day he punched 5 boys because one of them made the comment "Retards don't belong in this class" He just went ballistic and started punching and kicking any kid who had annoyed him for the past 2 years. He is easy bait as he reacts. The kids either ignore him or make fun of him.. He reacts so the cycle continues. There are only 36 kids in highschool (his school finishes this year) .

**As strange as it may sound -- he is setting limits with peers (albeit in an immature way). It's good that he is standing up for himself. He will mature by default by virtue of the passage of time (so you have time on your side). As he grows older, he will likely develop some less destructive ways of dealing with put-downs and ridicule (although some of the ill-treatment of others that he is experiencing now may haunt him to some degree for the rest of his life).**

Because he suffers from anxiety the school doesn't know how to punish him for his behaviour. Their response normally is to suspend him. They don't want to do this because it will damage his self esteem... something they are trying to develop. But he can't go around doing this. We have done anger management classes and he just doesn't seem to get it. He is never in the wrong or he justifies his behaviour.

**You would do well to have a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation performed. A Child &**

**Adolescent Psychiatrist may be able to prescribe a short-term mood stabilizer that can provide some assistance as he learns non-medical ways to cope with his low-frustration tolerance.**

In the last few weeks he has also been showing negative behaviour in class. Two teachers have got the "I don't have to do what I don't want to do" "I am stubborn you know!" "Nothing ever gets done if I do something!" This just highlighted the fact that we have gone down the wrong track with protecting him. He is trying to big note himself in the group of 6 boys? He is so tiny in comparison, although older than all of them.

The school and us are at a loss on how to deal with all of this. He denies standing up to the teachers. He won't apologize because he feels that he has done nothing wrong. Should the school suspend him?

**Absolutely. A natural consequence (i.e., suspension) would be in order here.**

One of the suggestions was bringing in a police officer to talk to him about aggressive behaviour.

**That would be just another traditional parenting strategy that would have very little (or no) positive outcome.**

We have no idea! When ever we ask him to do anything he plays the stressed card... his stress is very real and he has developed dreadful OCD and tics as a result. But then on the other hand there has to be consequences for behaviour. At this point I want to just pick up all his electronic stuff and smash it on the ground (Okay not really what the program suggests!!!!... but it would make me feel better!!!!)

Where do we go to from here? Tony Attwood the ASD authority told me that I need to have therapy for him to deal with his stress. CBT just doesn't work... he just doesn't get it. I feel maybe he just manipulating us all!!!!

**I'm guessing that you feel sorry for him on multiple levels -- he's got all these mental health problems ...he's getting picked on at school ...yada yada yada.**

**Bottom line: If he is still acting out to this degree -- then your tough love has not been tough enough. As I see it, the ball is in your court.**

**Be sure to review the checklist above to see what important pieces you may be missing.**

**Mark**

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:40AM (-07:00)

# "I can earn more money selling drugs!"

Wednesday, May 06, 2009

Dear Mark,

I have been trying to get him to earn some money but not successfully as you know. When he was grounded the other weekend I did however manage to get him to do an hours work cleaning down our elderly neighbours walls in preparation for them to be decorated. He has the opportunity to do this again as there are more walls to be cleaned. I even said our walls need to be cleaned too (all other jobs offered to him were turned down).

This weekend he moaned that he doesn't have enough money so I said he could do some work cleaning the walls to earn the money (£5 per hour). His answer to that was "that's long" I can earn more money selling drugs!

Yesterday I found £35 (about 50 US) which I know he has not earned or saved and am really worried. I asked him where he got the money from but at the moment he refuses to say - in fact he is just angry that I look in his pockets (I already knew how much money he had/didn't have and was surprised when he rang me from his mobile phone knowing he did not take out any money with him and he had no credit on his phone). I know it is wrong to look into his life like that but I just do not trust him (I have never done this to his brother because he is completely different).

I just don't know what to do. i would have thought the 6 hours or so he spent in a cell would have shocked him but maybe not (the case has been dropped). Do I just have to stand by and let him do these things and remind him that the consequence of making this choice is prison? Should I be giving him a bit more pocket money (I give him £5 a week and then have to give him money for when he is at table tennis at the weekends) - he is so materialistic and wants things without waiting and saving for them. This is not something he has learnt from us as we do not get into debt - have never bought things for him straight away - although he has never liked waiting for things he always wants them now.

Help!

M.

.....

Re: "Giving" him money.

Bad idea. He should earn his money.

Re: Selling drugs.

As per the eBook [in session #4]:

First, educate yourselves completely about drugs and drug abuse.

If your son's drug use has been purely recreational, you may only need to clearly state your position regarding abstinence and then closely monitor his behavior. If your son is more deeply into substance abuse, seek the advice of a behavioral health or substance abuse professional.

Don't show any emotions of anger or fear, and don't lose your good poker face -- but do send a strong message that drug and alcohol use is not acceptable. Don't lecture, be clear, and keep your message short and to the point.

Develop a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of your son's friends. Get to know those kids if possible. Form a network with the parents of your son's peers. Keep in touch with one another. Don't be surprised if other parents don't share your concern about substance abuse.

Check your son's whereabouts regularly. Don't be shocked if you find that another parent is using drugs with him, allows substance-abusing parties at their home, or is supplying the kids with drugs and alcohol. If you learn that one of your son's friends is involved in drugs, don't keep it a secret from his/her parents.

Restrict or eliminate use of the car, take away cell phones, and limit unsupervised free time until your son is committed to being "clean and sober." An out-of-control kid wants his freedom more than anything -- let him know that freedom is earned.

If your son wants to spend the night at a friend's house, check with the other parent to make sure he has permission. Also make sure the other parent will be home, and determine if the other parent has the same curfew and expectations you do.

Kids often select homes of absent parents for sleep-overs and all-night drug/alcohol parties. Make sure your son is not sneaking out after you go to bed. Nothing good happens after midnight.

Get Caller ID and Anonymous Call Rejection on the phone line that your son uses so that you know who is calling him. Require that he call home from a "land line" phone so that the location he is calling from appears on your Caller ID.

Find out where your son is getting the money to purchase drugs (e.g., your ATM card, wallet, money you give for an allowance, lunches, gas, etc.). Don't be surprised if you find he is stealing from you or others to finance his drug use.

Purchase urine-screen kits to use at home and test your son randomly.

Tell him the following: "If you choose to use drugs, you'll choose the consequence -- the police will be called and juvenile probation will be notified."

If your son continues to use drugs, follow through with this consequence.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:40AM (-07:00)

## You have changed our world for the better!

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Mark-

Just like to report that after a difficult week we have finally given back our son's items. He is back off to school after his three day suspension. He seems a lot more centered and co-operative. Thank you for all your efforts in talking out of control parents through the program. Brilliant!!! Everyone we meet is complaining about teenagers ...we pass on your website to them! Thanks so much for all your help Mark. You have changed our world for the better!

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:57AM (-07:00)

## You have given me hope and inspiration...

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Dear Mark,

I joined your programme yesterday in the UK. I have got to say it makes the best sense of anything that I have ever come across. Although I only had a few hours at it yesterday, I have done the topics very thoroughly (only the first 4 of week 1) and I had the best evening yesterday with my 13 year old daughter. I felt much more calm and confident because I believe that this is going to work if applied consistently. We went for a lovely walk and talked about her friends. The previous night, she was leaving home ...going to live in care and her bag was packed!

So, onwards and upwards. We'll see.

But I think that the fact that I am calmer has made a difference to her. She is unnerved. Poker face tonight.

You have given me hope and inspiration not to give up on my daughter. Last week I wondered if I even liked her; now I know that I do love her.

Thank you. I will keep in touch,

V.

Online Parent Support  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:04AM (-07:00)

## Parent Dealing With Difficult Teacher

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Hi Mark,

My son is a brilliantly gifted 15 year old that is a total underachiever in school. He is currently expelled for having a knife at school and is attending a special program for such students. He is of course underachieving and not doing his work at this program. The relationship with him and his current teacher has gone downhill as she is trying to micro manage him. For example, today she got upset because he was using the computer to print out a time sheet for the community service that he was going to after school. I have tried to explain to him that he needs to listen to her as she holds the key to his future, at the moment (she decides if he passes or not).

I found out today that she told my son maybe he belongs in a juvenile facility. Being a child and youth worker who has worked in such facilities, I can say with all confidence that my son does not belong in jail. He also told me that she has previously told him that he has ODD. I do not know her credentials and doubt that she was conducting any controlled test. I find it extremely disturbing that she would say these things to a student. I am considering making a complaint to the school board to let them know that we are not in support of our son being diagnosed without our consent and having this comment flippantly made to him. As I stated before, I am sure her diagnosis was based on her frustrations and not any test she conducted on him.

I know that my son can be difficult and he is very headstrong. I am also a strong advocate for him and will not tolerate any missteps made by educators. I do not want him labeled, especially without having the labels explained to him. He did not have a clue what ODD was. I guess I am his biggest advocate but I don't want to be over advocating if there is not an issue here.

Any feedback would be appreciated...

Thank you...

E.

.....

Hi E.,

When your kid comes home to you complaining about his difficult teacher, many times ones' first instinct is to get in the car, drive to the school then and there and "school the teacher" on the school's lawn, in front of the principal, the students and all of the other teachers.



strike! But, I also want to teach my daughters about respectful conflict resolution, and though I do believe there's a time and a place for the lion to ROAR, your kid's school is, in most cases, not one of them.

Especially when you find out that your son maybe not as blameless in the situation as you've been led to believe. In other words, get the whole story before you go ballistic! Kids have a magical way of leaving key facts regarding their involvement in any wrongdoing when telling their moms & dads their woes.

I'm not saying kids are always in the wrong and teachers are infallible, I'm just saying that most teachers are pretty good folk. Most teachers do not go into education with the goal of creating a "difficult" environment for youngsters. Although I do know teachers who have stayed past their prime, usually people in education are there because they genuinely like kids and want to help them learn. Almost everyone your kid comes in contact with in an educational setting is going to want to see him or her succeed.

I will also say that many moms & dads have no idea what strains teachers are under today with what the government expects of us, what our districts expect of us, what our administration expects of us, what the moms & dads expect of us and what the kids expect of us. (Not to mention what our own families expect of us!) What may seem like a "difficult" teacher may actually be a teacher carrying out state-mandated assessments, or implementing district NCA accreditation goals. Or, that seemingly difficult teacher may just be having a rough day (many times as a result of all of those above-listed pressures).

When your son comes home with a complaint, you are, of course, his number one advocate. I know that there are situations when it is appropriate for moms & dads to intervene on behalf of their kid. However, in most cases, teachers, even seemingly difficult ones, are willing to work as a partner with moms & dads to do what's best for your kid.

Moms & dads must also remember that teachers are just like any other human being out there. Sometimes people "rub each other the wrong way." This can happen with teachers and students too. Sometimes a kid may just not like the teacher's personality. It's not the kid's job to act in a professional manner, so in some cases, the kid not liking the teacher can spill over into his behavior, which may cause conflict in the classroom.

Conversely, if a student raises a teacher's hackles, it is that teacher's job to remain professional and hopefully that teacher will never let on that he or she doesn't appreciate that kid's personality quirks. However, teachers do make mistakes and if he does act inappropriately, he should apologize, and as a parent, you have the right to ask for that, if the teacher does not offer to do so on his own.

Moms & dads, though, should insist on their youngster's respect for all teachers, at all times, even when that kid perceives the teacher to be "difficult."

Now what if it isn't just a rough day for the teacher? What if your kid is making consistent complaints about this teacher? I suggest, as a sign of respect, using the proper chain of command. Depending on the age of the kid, you could ask your kid to try to talk to the teacher first to see if he can solve the problem on his own. If your kid is too young or too shy and you feel it's time for you to intervene, talk directly to the teacher. Send him or her an email, call him or her or make an appointment to see him or her in person. See what you, your kid and the teacher can work out. You'd be surprised what you can accomplish

with a two-sentence email, or a five-minute phone conversation.

If you do this and do not receive satisfaction after trying this, talk with the school counselor. If there is still no agreement reached, it is at this point you should probably take it to the top and call the principal. It would be unusual if you tried all of these steps and were unable to come up with some sort of solution to satisfy all parties.

I am of the opinion that most teachers, administrators, and counselors that I know will bend over backwards, do flips, cartwheels, and stand on their heads, do the conga, or cha-cha with a pit bull to ensure that a kid succeeds. And, a parent can take a kid far, but ultimately, especially at the high school level, the kid has to go the full distance on his/her own.

I know that one of the means to my own youngster's success is teaching them how to problem solve, deal with people that they may or may not like, and to be respectful of all people. It may be your first instinct to take care of your kid's problem for him or her, but allowing them the chance to work through it on their own can oftentimes be more the more valuable experience.

We all encounter difficult people in our everyday lives. School, many times, ends up being a microcosm for the "real world." Students can actually benefit from working through their problems with their difficult teachers because chances are that teacher won't be the last difficult person he or she encounters. And, when your kid sees you modeling respect for the teacher, even though you may not agree with everything the teacher says or does, your kid can learn a valuable lesson on working through conflict.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:20AM (-07:00)

## Why are so many children becoming violent ...why are so many committi...

Thursday, May 14, 2009



Mark-

Here's a news clip from our home town paper:

GASTON — A threatening graffiti note discovered last week inside Wes-Del High School has prompted school officials to ask police to be on campus through the end of the school year. Specifically, the threat said students were in danger on two dates — Thursday, and May 20. Supt. Steve McColley sent a letter home to parents Tuesday and in that letter noted “that school will continue to be in session without disruption for the final days of the 2008-2009 school year.” McColley said today that officers from the Delaware County Sheriff's Office are investigating, and officers will be present in both the middle-high school and elementary school. The superintendent said he wasn't aware of any significant drop in student attendance today, and that he has tried

to comfort parents that their children will be safe every day, including the days of the specific threats. At the same time, he said if parents choose to keep their children home on Thursday or May 20 because of concerns for that child's safety, it will be considered an excused absence. "We are taking added precautions," McColley said. "We're treating this incident with utmost care and urgency and concern. "Nobody has a right to do this to any school building or any student," McColley said.

My question is: Why are children so violent these days. We had a murder here (15-year-old killed a 17-year-old after school)... and now this threat in our small town school !

Why are so many children becoming violent ...why are so many committing murder?

J.

.....

Hi J.,

A 12-year-old Black boy in Pontiac, MI, recently became the youngest person in the state to be tried as an adult in the shooting death of an 18-year-old.

In Jonesboro, AR, two White youngsters reportedly opened fire on middle-school students as they assembled outside during a fire alarm drill. The youngsters killed a teacher and four of their classmates.

In Chicago in 1994, two Black youngsters, ages 10 and 11, were charged with murder after they dropped a 5-year-old boy from a 14th-floor window of a housing project because the victim would not steal candy for them.

More recently in Springfield, OR, a 15-year-old White boy who had been expelled a day earlier for bringing a gun to class reportedly opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle in a high school cafeteria, killing at least one person and wounding seven others. The boy is also a suspect in the shooting death of his parents.

Each of these stories shocked the nation and received widespread media attention. They are examples of how more and more murders are being committed by kids--Black and White--practically every day.

Homicide is the nation's third leading cause of death for elementary and middle-school kids, according to a 1994 report conducted by the Kids's Defense Fund.

A gun takes the life of a child every 92 minutes--the equivalent of a classroom full of kids every two days, according to recent statistics cited by the Kids's Defense Fund.

In 1995, there were 5,285 youngsters killed by firearms in the U.S., ABC's 'Nightline' recently reported.

Also, one out of every two kids murdered in America is a Black child, even though Black kids make up only 15 percent of the juvenile population. The Fund also found that nearly 50,000 kids and teenagers were killed by guns from 1979 through 1991, a total roughly equal to the number of battle casualties in the Vietnam War.

The reasons for the rise in kids committing murder are multi-faceted. You can't blame it on the school, and you can't blame it on the family, the breakdown of religion or the availability of guns. It is not that simple. It is usually a combination of things. Behavior is multi-determined. There are a lot of different reasons for behavior. However, some aspects of gang-related violence suggest that some kids are very psychopathic. They are just criminally-minded kids. The way some kids solve conflict is with weapons. Some kids are young predators. Also, kids tend to murder in groups. Remember, teenagers tend to do everything together. For example, if one guy visits his girlfriend, he's got to bring five other people with him.

We know that most juvenile crime is committed between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., which highlights the importance of having more adult mentors and after-school safe havens. We know that better-educated youths are less likely to commit violent crimes, which stresses the need for better schools and more talented teachers. We know that the increase in violent juvenile crime has been driven by the easy availability of guns, which stresses the importance of urging our political leaders to pass legislation to make handguns less accessible to our kids.

One key reason to why so many kids are committing murder stems from society's love and fascination with violence. Unfortunately, violence is a major theme in the American culture. Even the national anthem refers to violence as associated with the American flag ...and the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof to the night that our flag was still there. When we see kids murdered or murdering, we should realize that they are a reflection of us and the culture in which we live and accept. Our kids are modeling our values and cultural practices. The culture needs cleansing and a rebirth of values enriched with spirituality.

Violence portrayed in the media can also contribute to kids who commit murder. Kids and adolescents endure continual diet images of violence while being entertained by various media.

Today's kids are growing up too fast and do not have proper adult supervision. It's almost as if kids are expected or socialized or forced to grow up too soon. They become 'early-age adults' or 'hurried kids,' meaning they are exposed to and internalize adult forms of behavior. There's a lack of adult supervision because so many adults are working, or there's only one parent in the house. I am not denouncing single-parent families, because there are adults who are not supervising properly in two-parent homes as well. There are after-school hours where kids are not supervised. Kids in some instances are supervising themselves. You don't have people around saying, 'No, that is not appropriate.'

The lack of extended family and a lack of community networking is also a factor. Grandmas and aunties are two hours away; they are not as intricately involved as they were years ago.

Drugs, gangs and the easy availability of guns also play a role in kids committing murder. Younger and younger kids are getting involved in drugs. They are also reacting to the premium society places on material goods, like expensive sneakers and other apparel. They may become obsessed about dressing a certain way or having something they can't afford. But we have to look at what kind of family circumstances exist for that child, what kind of school circumstances peer relationships exist for that child.

Let me stress that crime among kids is not a Black issue. The perception is that crime in America is a Black problem. But the data does not support that. Whites kill Whites; Whites rob Whites. There's no doubt that things have been happening in their communities, but until now they have been seen as isolated events. This problem with our kids is happening everywhere, in heartland America, suburbia and rural communities.

Poverty and racism may contribute to the reasons that Black youths are killing one another. If you talk to one of these kids and ask him, 'Why did you shoot him?' ... He'll say, 'Because he dissed me.' Disrespect has become rationale for taking someone's life.

People living under conditions of oppression have very little control over their lives. The issue of respect becomes tantamount. You can not control your income, you cannot control whether you have a job or the money to support you and your family, but you can control the degree to which people show you respect. You can demand respect, particularly among other oppressed Black people.

Too many youths, particularly those in gangs, see how racism makes it difficult to succeed in society. The real question is, "What does it mean to grow up as a Black child in the United States in a society that has been steeped in racism?" They know as young Black men they are likely to have fewer opportunities to get a job, to be able to support themselves and be allowed to become respected members of society. The feeling of inequality leads to rage and the young men seem to be saying, 'If you are not going to let me legitimately join society, I will, in effect, become your worst nightmare. I will become precisely what you don't want me to be: an angry young Black man with a gun.'

Violence is also about power. It is a means of establishing yourself in a society where you feel powerless. And if you are living in a society where the penalty is very high in expressing your rage toward the oppressors, the oppressed will express their rage and violence to one another.

The late '80s, early '90s where the youth homicide rate in urban America almost doubled started with what one might have thought were isolated incidents: a 13-year-old killed here, a 14-year-old killed here, an 11-year-old killing a 9-year old. If you take troubled kids and add guns and add a precipitating event in a society that glamorizes explosive responses to anger, you've got danger, and I think it's now happening pretty much across the country.

We need to look at the families themselves to see what kind of stresses the parents are putting on the kids. We have to look at the parents' parents to see if there is a pattern of violence that might explain why kids are killing kids. Kids are becoming more callous. They don't care if they die or if they live. They don't see a future for themselves. When you ask them, 'Where do you see yourself?' ...They say, 'Oh, dead.' They don't see a future for themselves.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:05AM (-07:00)

# Parents & Power Struggles

Friday, May 15, 2009

We see the main problem is he has turned on us... he is angry and is baiting us... he just came in from soccer and hit me with a tirade of swearing. He was angry because he wanted takeaway food and he was told that there was food at home. He has now taken off – it is 11pm. How do we make him realise that he needs to conform to our rules. He has no friends and we are the only people who support him. The punching of the walls and threatening to tell people that his father rapes him etc are just his way of punishing us. Will keeping the screws on him keep making the situation worse or will it eventually break him?

.....

Re: Will keeping the screws on him keep making the situation worse or will it eventually break him?

First of all, we're not in the business of "breaking" children. This implies a power struggle with one winner and one loser. Rather, we're in the business of fostering the development of self-reliance.

Secondly, as long as you are complying with the strategies as outlined in the eBook, you should expect things to get worse before they get better. But hold on a minute...

It sounds like you are in a power struggle here. Power struggles create distance and hostility instead of closeness and trust. Distance and hostility create resentment, resistance, rebellion (or compliance with lowered self-esteem). IT TAKES TWO TO CREATE A POWER STRUGGLE. I have never seen a power-drunk child without a power-drunk adult real close by. Adults need to remove themselves from the power struggle without winning or giving in.

Create a win/win environment. HOW?

The following suggestions teach kids important life skills including self-discipline, responsibility, cooperation and problem-solving skills instead of "approval junkie" compliance -- or rebellion.

1. Ask what and how questions: How will we eat if you don't set the table? What is next on our routine chart? What was our agreement about what happens to clothes that aren't picked up? What happened? How do you feel about what happened? What ideas do you have to solve the problem? (This does not work at the time of conflict, nor does it work unless you are truly curious about what your child has to say.)

2. BONUS: HUGS! HUGS! HUGS! A hug is often enough to change the behavior -- theirs and yours.

3. Create a game: Beat the clock or sing songs while getting chores done.

4. Decide what you will do. I will cook only in a clean kitchen. I will drive only when seat belts are buckled. (I will pull over to the side of the road when kids are fighting.)

5. Distraction for kids and lots of supervision. Punishment decreases brain development. Kids are often punished for doing what they are developmentally programmed to do -- explore.

6. Do it WITH them. You may even want to go to the positive time out area with them.

7. KINDNESS AND FIRMNESS AT THE SAME TIME.

8. Get kids involved in cooperation. Say, "I can't make you, but I really need your help."  
(10 words)

9. Get kids involved in the creation of routines (morning, chores, and bedtime). Then the routine chart becomes the boss.

10. Limited choices: Do you want to do your homework before dinner or after dinner. Do you want to set the table or clean up after dinner?

11. Make a "Wheel of Choice" together. Draw a big circle and divide into wedges. Brainstorm lots of solutions to problems. Draw illustrations for each solution. During a conflict, invite child to pick something from the wheel.

12. No words: Use pantomime, charades, or notes. Try a hug to create closeness and trust -- then do something else.

13. Non-verbal signals. These should be planned in advance with the child. An empty plate turned over at the dinner table as a reminder of chores that need to be completed before dinner; a sheet over the television as a reminder that homework needs to be done first or that things need to be picked up in the common areas of the house.

14. Positive Time Out. Create a "nurturing" (not punitive) time out area with your child.

15. Put the problem on the family meeting agenda and let the kids brainstorm for a solution.

16. Use reflective listening. Stop talking and listen. Try to understand not only what your child is saying, but what he means.

17. Use ten words or less. One is best: Games. Towels (that may have been left on the bathroom floor). Homework. (Sometimes these words need to be repeated several times.)

Every child needs discipline, and the discipline style can provide connection or disconnection in the relationship.

The goals of discipline are:

1. To instill values.
2. To protect the child.
3. To teach the child lifelong skills for good character, such as responsibility and self-control.

Effective Discipline is:

- As fair and consistent as possible.
- Be Proactive. Moms & dads find underlying causes of misbehavior as well as teach future desired behavior. Punishment tends to be reactive and aims to just stop behaviors. Discipline connects the parent and child in their relationship. Punishment disconnects them.
- Kind, firm and safe.
- Mutually respectful: "Do unto others as you would have done to you." Although moms & dads have far more experience and knowledge than their kids, both moms & dads and child have the same right of having their feelings and dignity equally respected.
- Never includes punishment. Common examples of punishment are grounding with no time-limit, unrelated consequences, spanking, and threats of any kind.
- Ninety percent prevention and ten percent correction.
- Teaches and guides kids how to think for themselves. It doesn't just force them to obey. The world is a different place than 30 years ago. We don't want our kids to just blindly obey anyone — especially adults that may not have their best interests in mind. We want them to think for themselves and make good decisions.
- Uses real world "cause and effect" learning experiences.

#### Re: Power Struggles:

- Power struggles are generally about meeting needs: the needs of the parent and the needs of the child. Both aim to get their way, but at the expense of the other person not getting their way.
- Power struggles are often the result of the use of punishment. Kids will often react to punishment in the forms of rebellion, retaliation, fear, and/ or passive resistance.
- When moms & dads and kids are locked in a power struggle, it is important for the parent to stay calm and let go for the moment. They have more experience in self-control and can switch gears easier. Refuse to participate. The time to re-examine the needs of the moms & dads and child causing the power struggle is later, when the emotional temperature in the relationship has gone down. Be sure to address it though. Don't let it go unresolved forever.

Kids don't really misbehave. They act in inappropriate ways to get their needs met. The job of moms & dads is to meet those needs and teach kids how to get them met in socially appropriate ways. Kids are like icebergs. We see the tip of the iceberg (behavior) protruding out of the water. Most of the time, we don't even look at the massive ice part under the water (which are the needs and feelings) that supports the behavior. As moms & dads, we need to jump out of the boat, and into our submarine to look at what's happening with the child underneath the iceberg tip. Once the underlying needs and feelings of the child are recognized and addressed, the behavior often improves.

The most effective discipline tools used for older, school-aged kids and teens are active listening, "I" messages, time in, changing the environment, modeling, related consequences, and problem solving. Family meetings are also especially effective for this age.

A crucial discipline tool often overlooked is meeting the needs of moms & dads. Moms & dads who are hungry, tired, stressed, need support and a time-out don't often make their best parenting decisions.



You can't raise a child in a dictatorship and expect them to function as an adult in a democracy.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:35AM (-07:00)

## Teaching Oppositional Defiant (ODD) Students

Monday, May 18, 2009

My daughter has ODD and been suspended 9 times this year. Her school doesn't seem to be giving her any support, just suspending her. She is getting really upset as she thinks everyone is giving up on her. What can the school do to help?

.....

### Teaching Oppositional Defiant (ODD) Students—

If you are a teacher who finds that "nothing works" to manage some students, this article may help. It's way past time for you to learn about ODD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

In college, you probably got very little training on basic mental health, but if you've been teaching for more than five minutes, you know that little bit of training wasn't enough. Here's just a quick peek at what they should have taught you in college about basic juvenile mental health.

### WHAT DOES "OPPOSITIONAL-DEFIANT" MEAN?

"Oppositional-Defiant" is a mental health diagnosis that describes kids that have consciences but sometimes act like they don't. This diagnosis can only be applied by a mental health professional but will be very important for any youth worker to know and understand. This diagnosis is far more hopeful than "conduct disorder," which means the child lacks a conscience and a real capacity for relationships. While the oppositional-defiant child (ODD) may also appear to have little conscience or relationship capacity, you may be able to improve that with the right approach and methods. With conduct disordered youth, such improvement may not be possible.

### WHAT DOES "OPPOSITIONAL-DEFIANCE" LOOK LIKE?

Oppositional-defiant kids are often some of your most misbehaved students. They may disrupt your class, hurt others, defy authority and engage in illegal or problematic conduct. Though they may look similar to conduct disorders, their bad behavior is usually less severe, less frequent, and of shorter duration. The ODD label is often inaccurately applied as this dynamic can be a difficult concept to grasp and apply. Many ADD youth are also ODD, and boys dominate this category.

### THE 3 AREAS OF HELP FOR ODD YOUTH

The thrust of helping the ODD child must focus on:

- 1) Skill building, plus
- 2) "Pulling up" that conscience and
- 3) Improving their relationship skills.

For skill building, teaching them how to regulate their anger, actions, peer skills, verbal output, etc. will be critical. But equally important, this child must be aided to care about others and to be guided more by conscience.

#### STRATEGIES TO STIMULATE THE CONSCIENCE OF ODD KIDS

To help "pull up" the child's conscience, use this intervention. It can be used pro-actively or reactively (before or after the child has engaged in misbehavior.) For example, let's say the child has stolen the teacher's pen; you can say "I want you to imagine that we're making a video about your life. Are you impressed?" That "uncomfortable sensation that the child may have in reaction to this intervention may be the conscience stirring.

Another intervention to stimulate the conscience—

After the child has engaged in a problem behavior, such as stealing a pen, as in the example above, ask the child, "So what's your integrity worth to you?"

To adapt the intervention shown above for young children, simply rephrase the question to "So what's people believing in you, worth to you?" Or, rephrase it to "So what's people trusting you, worth to you?"

Before a child undertakes a problem behavior, ask the youth to imagine that s/he will read about that act on the cover of the local newspaper in the morning. Ask the child their reaction. If they say that they wouldn't want to read about it in the newspaper, the next morning, then you can say "Then don't do it!" This image makes a fast and easy guide for kids to follow to evaluate whether or not to do questionable behaviors. This intervention is a good choice to use with children whose conscience provides little guidance.

Educational Implications—

Students with ODD may consistently challenge the class rules, refuse to do assignments, and argue or fight with other students. This behavior can cause significant impairment in both social and academic functioning. The constant testing of limits and arguing can create a stressful classroom environment.

Instructional Strategies & Classroom Accommodations—

- Allow sharp demarcation to occur between academic periods but hold transition times between periods to a minimum.
- Allow students to redo assignments to improve their score or final grade.
- Ask parents what works at home.
- Avoid "infantile" materials to teach basic skills. Materials should be positive and relevant to students' lives.
- Avoid making comments or bringing up situations that may be a source of argument for them.

- Establish clear classroom rules. Be clear about what is nonnegotiable.
- Give 2 choices when decisions are needed. State them briefly and clearly.
- Make sure academic work is at the appropriate level. When work is too hard, students become frustrated. When it is too easy, they become bored. Both reactions lead to classroom problems.
- Maximize the performance of low-performing students through the use of individualized instruction, cues, prompting, the breaking down of academic tasks, and debriefing, coaching, and providing positive incentives.
- Minimize downtime and plan and transitions carefully. Students with ODD do best when kept busy.
- Pace instruction. When students with ODD have completed a designated amount of a non-deferred activity, reinforce their cooperation by allowing them to do something they prefer or find more enjoyable or less difficult.
- Post the daily schedule so students know what to expect.
- Praise students when they respond positively.
- Provide consistency, structure, and clear consequences for the students' behavior.
- Remember that students with ODD tend to create power struggles. Try to avoid these verbal exchanges. State your position clearly and concisely. Choose your battles wisely.
- Select material that encourages student interaction. Students with ODD need to learn to talk to peers and to adults in an appropriate manner. However, all cooperative learning activities must be carefully structured.
- Structure activities so the student with ODD is not always left out.
- Systemically teach social skills, including anger management, conflict resolution strategies, and how to be assertive in an appropriate manner. Discuss strategies that the students may use to calm themselves when they feel anger escalating. Do this when students are calm.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:29AM (-07:00)

## Adult Children Living at Home

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

What To Do When an Adult Child Moves Back Home (or has never left)...

Have your adult kids returned to the nest? Are you ready to help them get back on their feet? Are you prepared to lay down rules and protect your own financial stability?

Whether they live under your roof or not, your adult kids are just that: adults. They have the right to be treated as such, just as you have the right to expect them to act as such. Because they are adults, the rules you can appropriately have over their life and their conduct is significantly different from those you had while they were underage.

House Rules Versus Running-Their- Life Rules:

This is where it gets tricky. Moms & dads love their kids. They want the best for them. When they see their kids clearly making mistakes and bad choices, they immediately want to intervene. The key is to remember that they are adults now and they have the right to make the choices they make as well as face the consequences, good or bad, of those choices. This is when all those years of teaching them should be kicking in. We all learn through our mistakes, and we all continue to make mistakes as adults. Our adult

kids have the right to live as a mistake-making/consequence-facing human, just as we do. . .and as we are.

#### General Guidelines:

- Let your adult kids plan their own lives. Moms & dads should not try to make a life plan for their adult kids; this is something they need to devise on their own so they will follow it. Moms & dads can guide and support their kids, but treating them like babies may cause them to regress. They need to be moving ahead and maturing, not regressing into childhood roles. Adult kids should be living as independent young people and making their own way. They need to decide for themselves what they want out of life, and devise a plan to obtain it.
- Set boundaries without feeling guilt. Moms & dads need to put down boundaries and stick to them. Kids often assume the victim role and say, "I can't do it. I have to live here." Moms & dads buy into this thinking, and then feel guilty because they want to help their kids. When they feed that guilt, they ignore the fact that they are crippling their kids's advancement in life.
- Think about the true meaning of help. There is an old saying: "Those for whom you do the most, wind up resenting you the worst." Are you really helping your kids if you're not showing them how the real world works? Moms & dads need to redefine what it means to help someone. Look at your motivation for helping your kids. If you are doing it to feel better about yourself, then you probably don't have your kid's best interest in mind. You don't help people by taking away their self-sufficiency, pride of accomplishment and achievement. Kids need to take an initiative and find ways to achieve their goals on their own. If something is important enough for your kids, they will find a way to make it happen.

When House Rules are established, they need to remain focused on the Household. The following is a general list of common areas to address:

- Rent. Does this amount cover just shelter, or are food and utilities covered as well? If food is not covered in the amount, will they buy their own groceries, or contribute groceries to the household? When is the rent due, and what is the late payment policy? Will a deposit be required? Will said deposit be returned in part or full? If so, under what circumstances?
- Chores. How will they be divided? Obviously the adult kids need to be responsible for the cleaning of their own private areas, but what about shared living areas? What is the timeline for doing the chores in the common areas? How will the laundry facility be shared?
- Company. If the entrance to their private living areas is not private, you have every right to set hours for entertaining. Other areas to address would be those house rules other members of the household must follow such as no one of the opposite gender in the bedroom, no company in the house after midnight, etc. House rules apply to all in the household.
- Conditions of Residence. These would be rules as to why they are being allowed to move in and what will cause an eviction. Some moms & dads have a general rule that any kid living with them must be attending school full-time, working, or serving in the

armed forces, as there will be no 'free ride'. If the kid is in school full-time they live in the home rent-free. The other circumstances require the payment of rent, usually based upon their ability to pay.

- Household Influence. If you have a rule against no alcohol, no drugs, and no r-rated movies, for example, in your home; you have the right to extend that rule to the adult kids. Anything you believe to be harmful to the environment of your home or harmful by way of example or risk to the underage kids is eligible for rule setting in this category. These items must be carefully addressed so they do not become matters of running the adult kid's life, or about what they do outside of the home. These rules need to stay strictly focused on the home environment.

- Their Kids and Pets. Keeping them under control and also living according to house rules. You have the right to have your privacy and your belongings respected. You have the right to expect them to parent their own kids and care for their own pets. This area can become an area of contention when moms & dads desiring to be helpful begin to interfere in the parenting style and routines of their adult kids. This is a huge no-no. They are adults and those are their kids. Unless your grandkids are in imminent danger, you have no right to interfere.

#### Running-Their-Life Rules:

It is difficult to see someone you love make choices that you know will have a bad outcome, or which you do not personally agree with. As moms & dads of adult kids, you must first and foremost respect their rights as adults.

Whether they live under your roof or not, you have no right to insist upon setting rules which interfere in their right to choose for themselves what to do with their own life. Some examples of Running-Their-Life Rules are as follows:

- How they dress or style their hair.
- How they parent their own kids
- Places they may go.
- Their diet and exercise program or lack thereof
- What line of work or field of study they may be involved in
- Where they may attend church or if they attend church or not
- Where they may work or go to school
- Whether they get piercings and tattoos
- Who they may associate with outside of your home.

#### In Cases of Danger Exceptions:

In some cases, there is true and imminent danger involved to the safety and welfare of your adult kid, their kids, your own underage kids, or yourself. In these cases, you have every right and responsibility to act. A few examples would be as follows:

- Alcohol and Drug abuse. If their life or the life of another is at risk by all means intervene. This is where programs such as Al-Anon can help you understand the dynamics and what you can and should do. You may have to become acquainted with the principles of Tough Love and actually hold an Intervention to help your adult kid.
- Clear animal abuse or neglect as outlined by your state or local government. Your



## Success Factors—

Studies show that the return to the nest works best when several factors are present:

- The boomerang kid gets along with mom. (The relationship with the father seems to be less of a factor.)
- The boomerang kid is cheerful and good company. (Mothers, especially, like the company of the young person and see it as a benefit of the return to the nest.)
- The boomerang kid pays rent or contributes to the household in a tangible way. (About half make a payment of rent.)
- The moms & dads are in a long-term marriage.
- The return is a safety net while the boomerang kid makes a transition, based on a clear-cut need.
- The return is temporary and a one-time event. (Kids who repeatedly boomerang find that relations with moms & dads worsen each time.)

## How To Make It Work--

Most researchers agree that you as a parent can take steps to create a win-win situation:

1. Do not sacrifice your own financial future. Decide how much you want and can afford to help. Kids tend to think their moms & dads are wealthy, while some moms & dads provide more financial support than they can afford. Remember that your kids have decades to build their financial security, while you may be only a few years away from your retirement date. Ironically, if you are not careful, you could end up depending on your kids for help in your old age.
2. Help them restructure debts, rather than simply bail them out. Then teach them how to avoid new debt. One option is to match debt-reduction payments, with the understanding that they put away credit cards and live within their means.
3. Insist on responsibilities, which may include paying rent and/or payment in kind, such as taking on household chores (e.g., doing laundry, making dinner two nights a week, buying groceries). This can often be negotiated. One method is to ask the returning kid what he or she believes would be reasonable rent. (This is also the area, when not clearly laid out, that can result in the most misunderstandings, as adult kids return to old habits of expecting to be taken care of.)
4. Set a departure date, whether it be three weeks or three months.
5. Set house rules. Put them in writing. Make it a contract. Remember, it's still your house.

Boomerang Kids – having your darlings return to the safety net of their home – can be wonderful time of family closeness. Setting the tone, laying out the ground rules, and making smart-money financial decisions can help create a positive, supportive environment that is in the best interests of you and your returning family members. Good luck.

## Reestablish the boundaries—

Whatever kind of behavior they expect from members of their household, these need to





your rules they can also help enforce them. By having all of the moms & dads in agreement the kids will feel the pressure.

- o If both of you sit down together for a moms & dads' meeting and discuss the new rules you'll have a better chance of the rules being followed and everyone being happy once they're presented to the child.

- o If one parent is easily swayed or will cave if confronted by the child you should point out that weakness when you are setting up the rules in your moms & dads' meeting.

- o Realize that a step-parent has just as much right to decide what goes on in the home as the biological parent. By marrying into the family you were given a say in how the home is ruled.

3. Make a plan together. Living independently requires an income and a variety of different life skills. Help your kids analyze their situation and plot a realistic course of action.

4. Stay involved. Once you have a plan, meet with your kids weekly (or more often as needed) to communicate, assess the situation, identify short-term tasks, and especially to recognize and celebrate progress! Collaboration and cooperation between moms & dads and their kids can be a beautiful thing, but it takes lots of energy.

5. Consider a no-guests rule. Sharing your house with your adult kids can be challenging enough, without opening your home and your refrigerator to your kids' friends.

- o Be firm and address the situation. If necessary, explain it to the friends as a new rule.

- o Consider making the bedroom a no guest zone.

- o Don't be shy. Address the subject of having girlfriends/boyfriends over. Forbid your home from being used for their sexual convenience. If possible, forbid "dates" from coming over as soon as possible so bad habits don't develop.

- o It is perfectly reasonable to tell the kids they cannot entertain friends or other guests in your home, and this gives your kids a powerful incentive to find their own living situation.

6. Implement a list of chores and a curfew. At the very least, your kids should clean up after themselves and be considerate of you and other residents at all times. Don't feel guilty about this or let your kids squirm out of it; they will need domestic skills and basic discipline to make it on their own.

7. Don't provide all the meals. While your adult kids are living with you, make certain they contribute their fair share to buying food, cooking, and cleaning up afterwards.

- o Start by asking them to make a quick run to the store for basic items. Make it their job to buy certain grocery items every weekend such as milk, cereal, bread, eggs, etc. They'll learn to budget their money and schedule the time to get it done.

8. Collect rent. The kids may be living with their parent(s), but if they're adults, they should help to support themselves. Be firm about this - it will help build your kids' self-esteem as well as keeping your resentment in check. Start small and increase the monthly amount over time until it approximates the cost of a studio or roommate situation.

9. Live your life. Socialize, redecorate your house, get a dog or cat. Don't let your kids

cramp your style - that phase of your life is over!

10. Get some support. Talk with friends who are facing the same dilemma; enlist the help of a counselor, relatives, your church, and others who care about you and your kids to help you keep your resolve and help your kids take the plunge and move out. Make sure you and your spouse are communicating.

11. Report any unkind behavior or rude remarks to your spouse. You should both be aware of how the child is treating the other person. Take aggressive behavior very seriously.

12. Don't make living at home too comfortable or convenient. You are a parent, not a butler or maid. Consider removing televisions, video games, and computers, or at least limiting access to them, especially if these things are distracting the kids from getting jobs, saving money, and completing other parts of the move-out plan.

13. Stay positive. Focus on helping your kids towards independence and on the progress you and your kids have made, not on the negatives.

14. Be firm. If your kids disregard the rules of the house or treat you with disrespect, you must introduce consequences, up to and including forcing them to move out. Taking your adult offspring to a homeless shelter or changing the locks is excruciating, but it is kinder than hating them for continuing to take advantage of you.

15. Draw the line. There are some things you must not allow your kids to do under your roof, including dealing or using drugs, dangerous or illegal activities, and anything that endangers or infringes on the rights of other family members. If your kids persist in such activities, you may have to throw them out. If your family has conservative views on sexual activities you should also restrict the access to your home.

16. Set Goals and Deadlines. Give them a time line by which point they need to move out. You can change the locks if necessary but do try to have them move out on their own.

17. Stand by your rules. It's tiring to enforce them all the time but by ignoring some rules they assume you will cave on the time line to move out.

18. Work with your Spouse. Don't let your child gain the upper hand by turning you away from the rules that you and your Spouse worked out together. It's easy to get defensive and take the side of the child over your Spouse but remember... You and your Spouse are the rulers of your Castle, not you and your Child. Defensive Moms & dads become Single moms & dads quickly and is it really necessary to lose a Spouse because you can't tell your adult child "NO"?

19. Stay Out of the Drama. Your child(ren) have the ability to trigger you by what they say and do. Move past the emotion and drama. You are NOT a bad mother or father, you did the best job you could with the resources that you had and what you knew at the time. You are not helping yourself or your child by allowing yourself to be held hostage by anger, fear or even mental illness. Get support someone to talk to that will give you clarity on what is real and what techniques you can use to be heard.

20. Don't Buy into the Poor Me Stuff. There are always excuses for not doing things.

Instead of listening to what your child is saying. Pay attention to what they are doing. Focus on their actions and their plans. When they start to complain about how hard it is. Be understanding but keep focused on the "action" that they are taking and the "plans" they have. There is the clarity. Your child may be arranging lots of job interviews but not getting hired. What could be happening here is for the child setting up interviews may be the desired result for them. They might have no intention of actually getting a job.

21. Teaching Life Skills. Don't think that by doing your child's laundry and cooking for him/her and handing out money is preparing them for the real world. They need to learn to take care of themselves. You must be firm and be ready for resistance. Remember, they are used to you doing everything for them and they may not be ready to give that up but you must prepare them to live life when the time comes you are no longer around. You may think being hard on them is tough but doing everything for them makes them helpless and lazy adults and it will be even harder for them once you're not around.

22. Be frank about this. Drug use or friends who use drugs are not allowed on your property. Do not allow them in your home. If they have listened this far, then possibly they will listen to you about this. If they are high then wait to comment about this. Make sure you are not high.

Tips:

- Adult kids are masters at playing your emotions. The longer you give in the longer they will play you like a fiddle and the more unhappy you will be. It is your responsibility as a Parent to make them ready for the real world. Letting your child stay home and taking care of him/her like a Maid is YOUR fault, not the child's. If you baby them then they have no reason to leave do they?
- Ask them how much they've saved for a deposit on a new place. Help them keep track of their savings if you need to. Reward good saving practices by offering additional rewards as incentives. For example, after they've saved a predetermined portion of what they would need you can offer them certain furniture pieces, buy a microwave but don't allow it out of the box, help them pick out kitchen items or furnishings. Keep those in a "storage area" assigned for the new place but off limits for now. Seeing the items will further encourage independence.
- Discourage them from spending money on unneeded items. Are they buying video games, guitars, clothes, eating out with friends? Help them make a budget. Keep your eyes open and point out unnecessary spending. Explain to them what it's really like in the real world.
- Don't allow them to ban you from their room. It's your home. You should feel encouraged to go in from time to time, look for expensive and unneeded purchases, make sure it is clean. If they argue, remove the door from the hinges.
- Don't baby them, but do support them.
- Don't just hold them to the same chores you had them doing as a child. They're an adult and capable of not only contributing but helping you make improvements to your home. Even if they are employed you should feel comfortable assigning them more demanding and labor intensive tasks. For example: cleaning out the garage and repainting it, cleaning out the attic or other storage spaces, removing paneling and repainting walls,

filing old papers and documents, organizing photos, redoing rooms in the house. The list is endless.

- Don't provide them with any additional conveniences at your expense. If they want conveniences they should get a job. This includes cell phones, cars, insurance, internet and even food costs depending on how much you are able to provide.
- Experts agree that the best way to discuss – and stick to – these household rules is to draft up a customized contract between you and your adult kids living at home. Schedule a mandatory family meeting.
- Get a calendar and establish a time line for getting a new job or additional jobs and moving out. Mark it on the calendar and let them know up front the date is firm.
- Helping them monitor their money and spending is essential. Consider setting up a savings account with both your names. You can monitor the progress and any money withdrawn won't impact your financial standing as it would for a checking account.
- If they are legitimately unable to find work ask your boss if they can be brought in one or two days a week for minimum wage. Have them file, etc. If you're able you can also take them to work and have them assist you with getting caught up on your work that could potentially make you more money. You may need to pay them out of your pocket but it could save you money long term.
- If they don't have a car, drop them off in a business or retail district and when you pick them up ask to see the application forms.
- If they spend too much time on line or on the phone, playing video games, etc. you should consider getting rid of the internet or phone line or eliminate their access to those luxuries. Consider locking up video game consoles, controllers and games.
- If your kid won't take initiative you can start speaking to neighbors. Find out who needs their lawns mowed, fence painted, etc. Because of your efforts you should feel comfortable being the one to collect the money once the job is complete and take a percentage. You can also make sure they did the job as instructed.
- If your child DOES have a post-graduate job, but its entry level (though on a career-oriented path), the odds are that they won't be able to afford living on their own just yet. As long as they contribute to the household's utilities, buy their own groceries (cooking for themselves), pitch in with household chores, and clean up after themselves, you have nothing to worry about. Give it a few years, as long as you can get along. Their salary will go up in time. Remember, many cultures are based on large families living together, and in today's financial crunch the job market is rough. Give them bonus points if they pay for their own health insurance.
- If your kids do require moving back home after school, after a job loss or divorce you should establish up front that you are doing this as a favor and it is temporary.
- In some areas it is common for kids to stay in the parental home longer than in other areas. The cost of living in a region is the main reason but there are other factors. Just because you moved out when you turned 18 doesn't make it practical today. An 18 year old in a large city will not be able to support themselves as easily as an 18 year old in a

small town. If you're in a large city you may want to anticipate them staying longer or start the planning while they are still in school.

- Plan ahead! The concepts of responsibility, accountability, and independence should be introduced to kids gradually over a period of several years. If you overindulge your kids or allow them to feel a sense of entitlement, it will be very difficult for them to become successful, self-sufficient adults.

- Refuse to feel guilty. Remember, moving out and becoming self-sufficient is in your kids' best interests. Letting them stay at home and take advantage of you is not only miserable, but irresponsible.

- Remember it's your turn now No one wants to feel like they're letting their kids down, but if younger kids see their adult sibling still living at home when they are grown up, then what is to stop them from doing the same thing. You are not obligated to keep kids at home with you until they are in their 30's or 40's. That was not part of the deal. If they make poor adult choices that is their fault and not yours.

- Think of jobs around the house you would need to pay someone for and assign those to be done by a certain deadline.

- You should stay on them. Nag if you must. Get them up early and watch them leave the house in presentable clothes to begin searching for work. Remind them you are doing them a favor and they should not confuse this time with summer vacation.

Warnings:

- Adult kids living at home who are over-parented and over-supervised will rebel as quickly as teenagers, so you need to develop some strategies to establish a new adult-to-adult relationship – quick!

- Do not put your own financial future on the line to support your adult kids living at home. You do neither yourself nor your kids any good by creating extra debt or obligations for yourself.

- Don't allow them to use credit cards. If they can't afford to pay them they can be digging into a bigger hole. Confiscate them.

- Don't be cruel! No matter how annoying they may be now, they are still your kids, and you should treat them as such.

- Drug use or people carrying drugs onto your property is illegal. For that matter any illegal activity by your adult child exposes all of you.

- Drug use or their friends who use drugs should not be allowed to enter your property.

- If you don't know where the money to make the situation work will come from, you need to think long and hard about whether you can help your adult kids by having them live at your home.

- It may be hard to remember sometimes, but adult kids living at home are still adults. A sure way to set yourself up for conflict is to over-parent your adult kids.

- Keep an eye on bills coming in to make sure they have not opened lines of credit that can't be justified or paid for.
- Keep an eye on expenses and utilities. Keep records and set new rules if you find certain utilities costing significantly more.
- Once your kids are moved out, resist their pleas to move back in, especially if the living situation was difficult previously. It is usually better to lend your support in other ways, like helping them to find an affordable living situation or lending them money for utilities, etc. if you can afford it. They may struggle at times just to keep a roof over their heads, but they will probably prove resourceful and resilient enough to recover eventually. It may be better to let them be homeless for a time than to allow them to become helpless and dependent adults.
- This is one of the most difficult tasks in all of parenting. It takes a lot of patience and love, and sometimes professional guidance, to get through it.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:19AM (-07:00)

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in Adults

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Q & A from one of Mark Hutten's Seminars on "Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in Adults"

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in Adults: What Spouses Need To Know—

Are some ODD behaviors more serious or severe than others?

Any behaviors which would cause an adult to move from job to job or have serious difficulty in relationships with others (especially spouses) could have strong, negative consequences.

Are there any other conditions that can be associated with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER?

Yes there are. Sometimes conditions like diabetes, ADD, serious health conditions or learning disabilities create a "hiding" place for oppositionality and defiance. In these cases, OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER behaviors "hide" behind the primary condition, which provides an "excuse" for noncompliance. (Example: an ODD spouse refuses to work, continually claiming he is being treated unfairly by his boss.)

Can an ODD adult be diagnosed as both OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER and ADHD?

Absolutely.

Exactly what is OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER?

Oppositional Defiant Disorder is a diagnosed condition of negativistic, hostile and defiant behavior that includes symptoms of low frustration tolerance, argumentativeness, defiance, noncompliance, oppositionality, provocation, blaming, spitefulness, irritability,

resentment, anger or vindictiveness. (Not all need to apply for a diagnosis to be made.)

How is OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER diagnosed?

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is diagnosed by an appropriately certified or licensed health service professional that assesses a client and makes the diagnosis as it pertains to established criteria. The most commonly used criteria are found in the most current edition of a book entitled, The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

How much do external events and circumstances play into OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER?

They can easily make the OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER much better or much worse.

I find my husband is defiant toward some people, but not others. Why is this?

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER behavior is highly reactive to the environmental situations and circumstances. This certainly includes differences in authority figures, how they relate to the ODD adult, and how they "package" their expectations.

My ODD husband went to a counselor and was told after one visit that there was nothing wrong with him. I was totally frustrated about the whole thing. Why would a counselor say this?

The ODD adult, for awhile, can look perfectly fine in every regard. This is why a good therapist or counselor puts more stock in the "hard" facts about the client, not what the client is saying or doing in early visits.

If my ODD husband is depressed, what can be done to help him?

The depression needs to be evaluated and treated. It is common for oppositional and defiant behaviors to lessen as the depression is addressed. Sometimes medication helps.

Is lying a typical behavior of OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER?

It certainly can be. Usually, behaviors like lying differ from one individual to another as they become more severe in their behaviors. Many professionals believe that lying and stealing often go together.

Is OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER inherited?

Although there probably isn't an "OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER gene," characteristics like disposition and temperament can probably be inherited.

Is there any connection between OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER and the use or abuse of drugs and alcohol?

There probably is a connection, but not necessarily a direct one. OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER behaviors can occur in adults who are unhappy. Alcohol and drugs are one kind of "self" medication.

I've heard that many OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER adults are depressed? Is this true?

A solid piece of research done in 1993 indicated that, of the OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER adults evaluated, half of them also met the criteria for depression.

My husband walks half a block down the street to help a senior citizen bring in her

groceries, but he won't ever take out the trash at OUR house? Why is this?  
First of all, he wants to look like a good, kind and caring man. But consider that the job of helping the lady with her groceries is essentially a one-shot deal. Taking out the trash at home could last for years, not to mention the fact that we are much more direct in our behaviors of resistance and refusal with those who already know us well.

Sometimes it seems to me that my husband actually enjoys it when I become upset with him. Why is this?

He has gotten the satisfaction of knowing he has gotten to you. This "trap" is one of the toughest ones for spouses to deal with.

What about "passive-aggressive" behavior? Is that the same as oppositional defiant?  
"Passive-aggressive" behavior is a term that was used to describe both children and adults before there ever was a classification of OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER. Specifically, passive-aggressive behavior is but one type of oppositional and defiant behavior. Persistent and problematic passive-aggressive behavior in adults is more properly diagnosed using adult classifications, often falling under the general category of "personality disorders."

What are some of the signs that a child might become Conduct Disordered?

Things like family history, especially parents and siblings having trouble with the law, the activities of a child's "friends," a history of abuse or severe neglect in the home, use of alcohol and drugs, and a youngster's level of regard for others could all be indications.

What happens when OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER children become adults?

They can take their problems with them, causing difficulty in their relationships, marriage and work. The divorce rate, employment difficulties and the abuse of alcohol or drugs is usually higher in this population of young adults.

What is the difference between an OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER adult and one who is just stubborn?

Stubborn ODD people know when to give it up. They don't continue with their stubbornness to the degree and point that it creates serious hardships for them. Stubbornness can even be an attribute, such as a resolve that can shine through in tough times. Not so with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER, which, by nature of being a disorder, works against the person's best interest.

What is the difference between OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER and ADD?

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER (Oppositional Defiant Disorder) is a psychological condition that, favorably or not, is responsive to external situations and circumstances. ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) is brain-related, a neurological condition or immaturity that causes a person to have difficulty focusing on tasks. The condition of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) states that the person is additionally hyperactive and impulsive.

What is the likelihood that an OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER adult will become more severe in his or her behaviors (aggressive and anti-social)?

Here we're talking about serious, acting-out behaviors that could involve the law. Current data indicates about one in three OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER people will move on into a more serious disorder.

What would happen if an OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER adult is depressed, but



the depression goes unaddressed or untreated?

Both the OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER and the depression will continue to worsen to the detriment of the individual. Self-injury or even suicidal attempts are a possibility.

Is there any hope if my husband has this disorder called ODD?

Most wives of ODD husbands find that the parenting strategies used with ODD children ALSO work with ODD husbands. Why? Because ODD adults are very immature for their age. You may have a husband who is chronologically 35-years-old, but emotionally more like a teenager. So – yes – there is hope!

\* Excerpts from one of Mark Hutten's Seminars on "ODD in Adults"

==> Help for Spouses of ODD Husbands (a program for ODD teens that also - strangely enough - works for ODD adults)...

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:09AM (-07:00)

## Helping Children With Curfew

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Dear Mark:

My daughter is asking to extend her curfew. It seems she can fight whatever. Would you please help me and let me have a strategy to have the curfew settle down.

Thanks & Best Regards!

F.

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Hi F.,

Here are some ideas and perspectives regarding curfews, including why having a “time you agree to be home” that is somewhat flexible might be better than the notion of a hard-and-fast curfew which most of us grew up with:

1. Practice Negotiation. It can be tempting--and easy--to create hard-and-fast rules about curfews, but most parenting experts agree that times that teens must be home should be worked out by parents and teens together. “Where are you going to be? How long? Is that enough time? Can you get home by then? Will you let us know if it’s a problem?” Asking these types of questions sets up a pattern of negotiation between parents and child that allows the child to be honest. Such questions also show that your main concern is the child’s safety—that Mom and Dad are not, as teens are quick to believe, merely control freaks.

2. Focus on Schedules. We do best if we keep schedules and curfews flexible, depending on the child and the event. Discussing curfews as you talk about overall schedules will take the focus off of “curfew” and put it on the type of activity, safety

concerns, and responsibility issues.

3. **Emphasize Safety.** Helping our children understand that schedules are set up for safety can help them see curfews not as restrictive whims, but as practical matters. One family decided the “rules” regarding times to be home would be about knowing where all family members were at all times. This included children knowing where parents were as well.

#### Anger/Reason—

One father decided that the best way to handle kids coming home past the negotiated time was to simply explain that he was tired and would talk to the child later about the broken agreement. Then the next time the child asked to go out, he would say, “Oh gee, I’m just not up to worrying tonight. Why don’t you stick around” or “I’m sorry, you can’t go out tonight honey. I need my sleep”. Anger causes confrontation, but sometimes teenagers will listen to the practical effects that their lateness creates for you. (The humor in the responses also breaks down communication barriers.)

#### Contact List—

Have your sons or daughters leave a list of numbers where they will be and then let them know that you will be setting your alarm for the time they are expected home. You trust them, so it is no problem to go to sleep when they are out; however, should that alarm wake you and they haven’t called to let you know they will be home later, then you know something is wrong and you will start calling everyone on that list, ending with the police. However, if they are home on time, they can simply slip into your room and turn the alarm off before it wakes you.

#### Trust—

Create a relationship of trust by letting your children know that an important aspect of a curfew is for them to follow through on their promises. This is a different focus than “I don’t trust what you’ll be doing” or “I don’t trust your friends.” The reason for having a set time for coming home becomes more about the children showing you they are responsible and trustworthy.

#### Model—

Try to be organized and reliable with your own time to show your teen that you are serious about schedules and take other people’s time seriously.

#### Two-Way Street—

We’re often most effective when we simply let our teens know what our concerns are. For example, when our teen comes home late, we could say, ‘I hope this doesn’t happen again because I think it stresses our relationship. And you’re way ahead if our relationship is good. I think that when you do things that stress me out a lot, it doesn’t work out well for you in the long run’.

Handling curfews as part of the overall scheduling you do in a week helps your child have the opportunity to be responsible. Negotiation between parent and child is important and can create a sense of trust between parent and child in ways that strict one-way rules

usually do not.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:32AM (-07:00)

## Parents & Resentment Flu

Thursday, May 21, 2009

Mark-

After I sent you the e-mail and had the chance to review your response I sat and did some soul searching. I am struggling with some of the things that I am required to do. Not because I do not wish to comply, but because I am so badly hurt from the years of defiant behavior, lying, and stealing. I forgave him the best I could throughout the years and he turned around and did the same things repeatedly. Sometimes telling me that he hears things in his head and others because he can't help himself.

In my last e-mail to you I described one of our worst physical encounters with B\_\_ and there have been many. My only regret was that we did not call the police on him that night instead of allowing it to escalate the way it did. Yesterday I was met by someone from child protective services accompanied by a police officer. B\_\_ has threatened us with this before and we have feared it since it poured off of his lips. He states that my husband punched and bruised him. I can tell you that my husband pulled the child off his back and restrained him on the floor, but did not punch him. It is now our word against his and we feel like we are prisoners in our own home. The person appointed to our case heard us out and gave us a number to call in case he starts to destroy our home or attacks us in any manner again. We don't know what to do? The child throws himself through his room, against walls, furniture, and out of his window sill. I go to my room and shut the door as to not feed into his attention seeking behaviors, but when he is injuring himself and telling people that we did this to him it crosses the line. I ignore the behavior and it gets worse. He demands and manipulates an audience. According to him nothing is ever his fault and the world is against him. I do not know where to get help for us. At this point he has seen that we are powerless and that all he has to do is make up another story and we are in serious trouble. My husband and I do not want him home because with another accusation, we can lose everything. We are considering putting cameras throughout the house to ensure our safety through this process with B\_\_. We don't want to be with him unless the other parent is with us. Summer is here and his sister who is to spend the summer with us will arrive in a few short weeks and I don't know how to keep her safe and ensure that B\_\_ doesn't have all of us arrested. We need help. I have asked for help starting when he entered pre-school and all I got was a handful of varying diagnoses and a handful of prescriptions. He is bigger, stronger, and smarter and his behavior nor the outcomes are ever his fault. I find it nearly impossible to say I love you to him, I cannot stand to hear him ramble on because it is usually a fabricated story and when I get to the bottom of it I am more disappointed to find out he was at fault for whatever had happened and that he cannot and will not see it.

We have regular chores and each day the battles are getting worse and for the fact that I don't want the fight, I don't want to give them to him anymore. B\_\_ is only ever happy when he is running the show. Anyone other than him in control will create behaviors that

we not wish to have in our home or in our lives. B\_\_ thinks that because we were not arrested and that they won't keep Beth from coming here means that all is well. It is not well. My husband and I will have this stain on our (until yesterday) clean records till the end of our lives and again he walks away unscathed and newly empowered by his newest form of parental control.

Nick and I need help to get back on our feet on working in a better direction for all of us. Can you please tell us where to start again because we are heartbroken and devastated by what is happening?

Thank you-

A.

.....

Hi A.,

Sounds like you have a bad case of "resentment flu" ...also, it sounds like you feel a significant sense of defeat. When we drill deep into the root of resentment and anger, the cause always revolves around our ego and the mind's attempt to protect it from "extinction." Here is a series of thoughts I observed myself experiencing while confronted with such a scenario (some of which may strike you as rather odd):

- "Cave Man (Woman) Survives in a Tribe" - As tribal animals, our inner caveman cares about what others think of us, since if others didn't like us, we might be kicked out of the tribe. And for a caveman, life outside of a tribe means instant hardship and death. And so, when we learn that others think badly of us, we become unbalanced, unwell and very bothered.
- Animal Instincts - when my ego is hurt, my inner caveman quickly jumps out in attack mode. Even if I logically know that it is unnecessary to be in attack mode, caveman will still be there and I will experience feelings of animal instinct. In caveman days, if we didn't retaliate against others who hurt us, we would eventually be killed. So, this instinct serves as a survival mechanism and is a natural response to an attack. I believe that understanding this is vitally important to accepting our own reactive tendencies and to finally controlling these instincts.
- Defending Our Ego is Like Fighting Other Cave Men - When a caveman fights with another caveman in our modern age (i.e., now), nobody wins. We fight out of an instinct to survive, and to protect our ego-driven pride. In the end, nobody wins, since we no longer live in the stone-age and killing each other is no longer necessary.
- Defense - In an attempt to defend my ego, for having been wrongfully accused, my inner caveman strategized a battle plan of defense and attack. This included a list of harmful things I could say to the attacker.
- Ego Shock - feelings of shock, followed by increased heart rate. I could sense that my ego was hurt.
- Infused Anger - The more I thought about how I'd been wronged, the deeper I fell into

feelings of resentment, and even feelings of despair.

I am not suggesting that we suppress or deny these feelings. But rather, use responsible methods for dealing with these uncomfortable and unpleasant emotions so that we are no longer slaves to the emotional reflexes of our animalistic instincts.

As hard as it might seem while we are experiencing anger towards someone (especially our own child), the keys to overcoming the emotion lie first in understanding and finally in forgiving. This seems counter-intuitive, since our instincts tell us that we need to defend ourselves, and possibly come up with ways to hurt the other individual.

Understanding gives us insight into what the other individual is feeling. Even before we reach the stage of forgiveness, understanding will automatically ease some of the emotional burden we've been carrying.

Before seeking to understand, we need to find a place of clarity within ourselves. Clarity means that we are not acting out of our emotions or our caveman instincts. When we can step out of our inner caveman, we are able to see the situation for what it is. It will quickly become clear that the other individual was acting out of the instincts of their inner caveman, and thus blinded by their own emotions.

Let's dive deeper into each major step in overcoming these bothersome feelings:

#### 1. Clarity

In this step, the goal is to feel well again. When our minds are frazzled with random thoughts of pain and resentment, it is nearly impossible to overcome anything. Therefore, we need to first find peace within ourselves.

When we seek peace and clarity, we are ultimately creating the space within ourselves for alternative possibilities and healing. Without which, we will remain in a never-ending cycle of unnecessary pain and suffering.

- "You are In Control" - Remind yourself that you are in control of your thoughts and actions. You are never as helpless or in as pitiful a state as your ego would have you believe. Remind yourself of the responsible individual that you are - using the real definition of responsibility: the ability to respond, or the ability to control our responses. Map out the worst case scenario and accept it. You'll often find that the worst case scenario isn't as bad as the dreadful scenario that you have dreamt up in your mind.

- Exercise: Express Your Emotions - Fully express your emotions without physically harming anyone (including yourself). If you feel angry, express that anger verbally (while you are alone) with the intent of releasing it completely out of your system. You can jump up and down, cry out loud or exert unusual sounds. Listen to your body as to how it wants to release this negative energy. Give yourself a time limit of say 5 to 10 minutes in which you must express all your anger, either verbally or in writing. Additionally or alternatively, go for a run, a hike, a workout or a swim. Many individuals find exercise to be an effective way to release toxic energy.

- Exercise: Finding Peace via Focused Attention - This has been the most effective tool for me when clarity and inner peace is needed: First, find a comfortable seat and close your eyes. Bring your focus onto your breath. Focus all of your attention on your inhales

and exhales. Do this for about five minutes. Next, bring your attention to your heart (the center of your chest). Focus on all the things you are grateful for in your life, right now. You can either visualize each individual or thing, or you can hear the sound of these things spoken in your mind. As you see them, or hear them, experience the feelings of gratitude in your heart.

## 2. Understanding

Now that we've put our inner caveman/cavewoman aside, we can objectively look at the situation for what it is. We can seek to understand what is causing the other individual to act in this particular way.

In most cases, once we've figured out the cause for their behavior, we will find that it is often not an attack on us, but a reflection of their primal instinct to protect themselves.

What's more, as we gain perspective into their position, we might find that we've learned something valuable that will contribute towards our wellbeing and happiness in the future.

- Freedom of Expression. - Accept that it is okay for others (even your children) to have negative thoughts or feelings towards you. They have the same freedom of thought and freedom of choice as do you. Choose understanding. Choose compassion. Choose doing the right thing by staying honest to yourself. Outside of that, don't worry about it, let them go. We cannot control other's actions, so why should we exert energy trying? Let others be, and find peace with that.
- It's Not Personal - When individuals are in pain, they sometimes cannot help but to spread that energy onto others. When individuals communicate in ways that are hurtful to you, it is not meant to be personal, but rather a reflection of their internal state.
- The Painful "Enemy" - Seek out the scenarios and perspectives which may have triggered them to treat you in a manner that hurts you. They may be in such a deep-seated state of frustration and emotional disturbance that they have lost the capacity to communicate rationally and with consideration of your feelings. Seek to understand that individuals, by nature, do not want to harm others, but circumstances that trigger their inner caveman cause them to act out in self-defense.

## 3. Forgiveness

Not forgiving someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other individual to die.

Forgiveness is a gradual process, and understanding will eventually take us there. However, if we do not attempt forgiveness, the only individual we are harming is ourselves.

The goal here is to find peace with the situation and to move on with our lives. Life is too short to dwell on the past, or to dwell on other's opinions of us. Give yourself a gift of freedom: forgive them with grace, compassion and understanding.

- Forgive Others - After the exercise of breathing and gratitude, continue to keep your eyes closed. Now, let go of all resentment and regret. You can imagine each of these separately. Imagine all the individuals who you hold a grudge against. Optionally you may see their harmless face smiling at you. Recognize that we are all trying our hardest in our

current state of consciousness. Tell them in your imagination that you forgive them. Have the intention of forgiving others and ourselves for any actions that may have resulted in pain.

- Forgive Yourself - Forgive yourself for having had thoughts of retaliation, resentment, regret or grievance. Forgive yourself for exposing your inner caveman.

- You can repeat the mantra “Every decision I make is a choice between a grievance and a miracle. I relinquish all resentments, grievances and regrets. I choose the miracle.”

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:48AM (-07:00)

## Explosive Kids & Low Frustration Tolerance

Thursday, May 21, 2009



The term “explosive kids” is used to describe easily frustrated, chronically inflexible, explosive children. While many of these kids carry a variety of diagnoses, parents often tell us that the term “explosive kids” better describes their youngster’s struggles. In addition, many find that it also provides a framework for understanding and alleviating the difficulties with which they present. This will become more evident as you review the following in-depth description.

What does a youngster described as “inflexible-explosive” look like? Mark Hutten, M.A. provides a helpful list of criteria:

Common Characteristics of Inflexible-Explosive Kids:

1. While other kids are apt to become more irritable when tired or hungry, inflexible-explosive kids may completely fall apart under such conditions!
2. The tendency to think in a concrete, rigid, black-and-white manner. The youngster does not recognize the gray in many situations ( Mrs. Robinson is always mean! I hate her! Rather than “Mrs. Robinson is usually nice, but she was in a bad mood today”); may apply oversimplified, rigid, inflexible rules to complex situations; and may impulsively revert to such rules even when they are obviously inappropriate (“We always go out for recess at 10:30. I don’t care if there’s an assembly today. I’m going out for recess!”)
3. The persistence of inflexibility and poor response to frustration despite a high level of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The youngster continues to exhibit frequent, intense, and lengthy meltdowns even in the face of salient, potent consequences.
4. The youngster’s inflexibility and difficulty responding to frustration in an adaptive manner may be fueled by behaviors-moodiness/irritability, hyperactivity/impulsiveness, anxiety, obsessiveness, social impairment-commonly associated with other disorders.

5. The youngster may have one or several issues about which he or she is especially inflexible – for example, the way clothing looks or feels, the way foods taste or smell, and the order in which things must be done.
6. Inflexible episodes may have an out-of-the-blue quality. The youngster may seem to be in a good mood, then fall apart unexpectedly in the face of frustrating circumstances, no matter how trivial.
7. An extremely low tolerance for frustration. The youngster is not only more easily frustrated, but experiences the emotions associated with frustration far more intensely and tolerates them far less adaptively than do other kids of the same age. In response to frustration, the youngster becomes extremely agitated, disorganized, and verbally or physically aggressive.
8. An extremely low frustration threshold. The youngster becomes frustrated far more easily and by far more seemingly trivial events than other kids of his or her age. Therefore, the youngster experiences the world as one filled with frustration and uncomprehending adults.
9. A remarkably limited capacity for flexibility and adaptability and incoherence in the midst of severe frustration. The youngster often seems unable to shift gears in response to parents' commands or a change in plans and becomes quickly overwhelmed when a situation calls for flexibility and adaptability. As the youngster becomes frustrated, his or her ability to "think through" ways of resolving frustrating situations in a manner that is mutually satisfactory becomes greatly diminished; the youngster has difficulty remembering previous learning about how to handle frustration and recalling the consequences of previous inflexible-explosive episodes, has trouble thinking rationally, may not be responsive to reasoned attempts to restore coherence, and may deteriorate even further in response to punishment.

Should your youngster present with these difficulties, we strongly encourage you to join Online Parent Support (a program that possesses an extensive background and experience working with explosive kids) to provide recommendations that will help you, the parent, resolve most behavioral/attitudinal issues.

In establishing that developmental deficits in the domains of flexibility and frustration tolerance are the key factors underlying explosive behavior, we think the characteristics presented provide a more useful way of viewing our kids. This is very different from the conventional wisdom: that these kids are merely willful and spoiled, that they are fully able to control their explosive outbursts, and that poor parenting is to blame for their difficulties. Blaming parents for their kid's difficulties is not the best way to change things for the better in any family or classroom. When we dispense with the blame, the stage is set for adults to be part of the solution: re-establishing positive relationships with these kids, creating experiences that will provide the training and practice in problem-solving skills, flexibility, and frustration tolerance.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:44AM (-07:00)



# Head Injury & Child Behavior Problems

Monday, June 01, 2009

Mark

It has been a while since I last contacted you. I just wanted to let you know that I\_\_\_'s results of the QEEG have shown significant frontal cortex impairment which would affect his behaviour. I attach a copy of the letter the Clinical Neuro psychologist sent to the school requesting for additional time for his exams.

The neuro-psychologist says that it is not a license for his bad behaviour though. But she does point out that he cannot control his anger and does not always know what he is doing until it is too late. Also she says he should not be provoked or argued with as his brain cannot deal with it. It seems that he does go into a mad fit when he is angry.

In the meantime, we have had 4 sessions of Brain biofeedback treatment after the QEEG test (weekly sessions, he requires at least 18) for which I have to pay.

His behaviour, however, has become somewhat erratic. He has been caught in school while he was excluded from it for rude behaviour to a teacher) for drinking from a can of beer in the playground with a friend of his. This is the friend called Lloyd who is getting him in a lot of trouble (drinking, truanting bad behaviour, who has been expelled from a previous school). I\_\_\_ seems to have joined forces with this trouble maker and together they are causing double trouble.

Question: You told me last time, to wait until I get the results of I\_\_\_'s QEEG test which I have and which confirm frontal cortex damage. He is receiving treatment. In the meantime, while he is receiving these weekly sessions to repair his brain (he can only have 1/ week) as the brain cannot cope with any more. What do I do about his rude behaviour and drinking alcohol with friends, staying out late at night at the weekend with the same (bad) friends? His swearing at me and his dad if we reprimand him of any of his behaviour. He is breaking furniture in his bedroom and being rude and fighting with his brother. He can be quiet and good for about 7 – 10 days and then something will spark him off, normally when he does not get his own way or I ask him to have a time out. Whereas I feel that when I first started with your programme, I was very slowly getting some success but now with the diagnosis, I don't know which way to turn. Should he be allowed to get away with everything as I cannot confront him.

.....  
This situation does put you in a "double bind". On the one hand, the psychologist is saying "that it is not a license for his bad behavior" ...but on the other hand, you have been advised that "he should not be provoked or argued with."

But...

If you follow the program as outlined, you will not be doing any "provoking" or "arguing." I know you may want to view your situation as extremely unique -- and you may always run the risk of "feeling sorry" for your son. However, your situation is not that much different from any other parent who is working this program -- and you should NOT fall

into the "feeling sorry" trap.

Continue to work the program with no modifications. After all, this program is designed for kids who have issues such as mood disorders, impulse control problems, anger management difficulties, and so on.

Here are some pointers:

Head injury survivors may experience a range of neuro-psychological problems following a traumatic brain injury. Depending on the part of the brain affected and the severity of the injury, the result on any one child can vary greatly. Personality changes, memory and judgment deficits, lack of impulse control, and poor concentration are all common. Behavioral changes can be stressful for families and caregivers who must learn to adapt their communication techniques, established relationships, and expectations of what the impaired child can or cannot do.

In some cases extended cognitive and behavioral rehabilitation in a residential or outpatient setting will be necessary to regain certain skills. A neuropsychologist also may be helpful in assessing cognitive deficits. However, over the long term both the survivor and any involved family members will need to explore what combination of strategies work best to improve the functional and behavioral skills of the impaired child.

Even a child who makes a "good" recovery may go through some personality changes. Family members must be careful to avoid always comparing the impaired child with the way he/she "used to be." Personality changes are often an exaggeration of the child's pre-injury personality in which personality traits become intensified. Some changes can be quite striking. It may be, for example, the head injury survivor used to be easy going, energetic, and thoughtful and now seems easily angered, self-absorbed, and unable to show enthusiasm for anything. Nonetheless, try not to criticize or make fun of the impaired child's deficits. This is sure to make the child feel frustrated, angry, or embarrassed.

Head injury survivors may experience short-term problems and/or amnesia related to certain periods of time. Generally, new learning presents the greatest challenge to memory or remembering. In contrast, pre-injury knowledge is more easily retained. The ability to focus and concentrate are keys to addressing some short-term memory problems.

- Have the child repeat the name of a person or object, after you, if memory impairment is severe.
- Keep distractions (e.g., music, noise) to a minimum and focus on one task at a time.
- Keep to routines. Keep household objects in the same place. Use the same route to walk to the mail box or bus stop.
- Whenever possible, have the child write down key information (e.g., appointments, phone messages, list of chores).

If getting lost is a problem, you can label doors or color code doors inside the house or hang arrows to indicate directions. When going out, the child should be accompanied initially to ensure the route is understood. A simple map can be sketched from the bus

stop to the house. And make sure that the child always carries his/her address and emergency phone numbers.

A structured environment can be essential in helping a head injury survivor relearn basic skills. A written routine schedule of activities and repetition make it easier to remember what's expected and what to do next.

After a head injury a child may lack emotional responses such as smiling, laughing, crying, anger, or enthusiasm or their responses may be inappropriate. This may be especially present during the earlier stages of recovery. Recognize that this is part of the injury. Try not to take it personally if the child does not show an appropriate response.

Encourage the child to recognize your smile at a humorous situation (or tears if you are sad) and to take note of the proper response.

In some cases, neurological damage after a head injury may cause emotional volatility (intense mood swings or extreme reactions to everyday situations). Such overreactions could be sudden tears, angry outbursts, or laughter. It is important to understand that the child has lost some degree of control over emotional responses. The key to handling lability is recognizing that the behavior is unintentional. Caregivers should model calm behavior and try not to provoke further stress by being overly critical. Help the child recognize when his/her emotional responses are under control and support/reinforce techniques that work.

Provided a situation does not present a physical threat, various approaches may be used to diffuse hostile behavior:

- Do not challenge or confront the child when he is already angry about something. Rather, negotiate (e.g., if you don't like what's planned for dinner tonight, how about choosing Friday's menu?). Try to understand the source of the anger. Is there a way to address the child's need/frustration? (e.g., make a phone call, choose an alternative activity).
- Help the child regain a sense of control by asking if there is anything that would help him/her feel better.
- Ignore the small problems.
- Isolate the disruptive impaired child. Consider your own safety and his/hers. Treat each incident as an isolated occurrence as the survivor may not remember having acted this way before or may need to be prompted to remember. Try to establish consistent, non-confrontational responses from all family members (children may need to learn some "dos" and "don'ts" in reacting to the survivor).
- Offer alternative ways to express anger (e.g., a punching bag, a gripe list).
- Remain as calm as you can.
- Seek support for yourself as a caregiver. Support groups, professional counselors, and, if necessary, protective services or law enforcement may be contacted.
- Show extra affection and support to address underlying frustrations.

- Try to change the child's mood by agreeing with the child (if appropriate) and thus avoiding an argument.
- Validate the emotion by identifying the feelings and letting the child know these feelings are legitimate. Frustration over the loss of functional and/or cognitive abilities can reasonably provoke anger.

The child who has survived a head injury may lack empathy. That is, some head injury survivors have difficulty seeing things through someone else's eyes. The result can be thoughtless or hurtful remarks or unreasonable, demanding requests. This behavior stems from a lack of abstract thinking.

Help cue the child to recognize thoughtlessness. Remind him/her to practice polite behavior. Realize that awareness of other people's feelings may have to be relearned. "Cueing" or reminders can be helpful in improving concentration and attention. Repeat the question. Don't give too much information at once, and check to see that the child is not tired.

Head injury survivors should be encouraged to develop self-checks by asking themselves questions such as:

- "Did I understand everything?"
- "Did I write it down?"
- "I made a mistake" or "I'm not sure" should lead to the conclusion, "let me slow down and concentrate so I can correct the error."
- "Is this what I'm supposed to be doing?"

Correct actions should be consciously praised, "I did a good job".

It is relatively common for a head injury survivor to be unaware of his/her deficits. Remember that this is a part of the neurological damage and not just rebelliousness. Be aware, however, that denial can also be a coping mechanism to conceal the fear that he/she cannot do a particular task. The child may insist that the activity cannot be done or is "stupid."

- Build self-esteem by encouraging the child to try a (non-dangerous) activity that he/she feels confident doing.
- Give the child visual and verbal reminders or "hints" (e.g., a smile or the words "good job") to improve confidence in carrying out basic activities more independently.
- If you feel the child can handle confrontation, challenge him/her to try the activity. Demonstrate that you can do the task easily.

Coping with behavior problems after a head injury requires identification and acknowledgment of the impaired child's deficits. A comprehensive neuropsychological assessment is recommended. This may help both the survivor and the family to better understand neurological and cognitive deficits.

In some cases, it may be easier for the family caregiver to recognize personality changes than to resolve the problem behavior. Targeted strategies may be used to deal with specific behavioral issues.

Finally, it is critical that family members seek and receive support (family, friends, support group, counselor) in dealing with their own emotional responses to caring for a head injured loved one.

Good Luck!

Mark  
[www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com](http://www.MyOutOfControlTeen.com)

#### Recommended Reading—

Awake Again, Martin Krieg (1994), WRS Publishing, available from the author: P.O. Box 3346, Santa Cruz, CA 95063. (408) 426-8830.

Head Injury and the Family: A Life and Living Perspective, Arthur Dell Orto and Paul Power (1994) GR Press, 6959 University Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32193. (800) 438-5911.

Head Injury Peer Support Group Training Manual, Family Caregiver Alliance (1993): San Francisco, CA.

Professional Series and Coping Series, HDI Publishers, PO Box 131401, Houston, TX 77219. (800) 321-7037.

Therapeutic Fun for Head Injured Persons and Their Families, Sally Kneipp (ed) 1988, Community Skills Program, c/o Counseling and Rehabilitation, Inc., 1616 Walnut St., #800, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:00AM (-07:00)

## Practical tips to diffuse the hatred between father and daughter?

Tuesday, June 02, 2009

Hi Mark

During the last few weeks me and my husband have been following (as much as we can) your program.

Thank you for the great idea to make it available on line.

We have a fourteen year old daughter and an eight year old son.

Our daughter is very well described in your lectures. I recognised that my overindulging approach and the fact that in the past me and my husband had different opinions on her parenting and also the fact that she is very strong willed person led to her behaviour

problems.

Before starting the program we were aware that she was having sex with her 18 year old boyfriend. Her constant threatening that she might run away stopped me from interfering directly. In the very beginning of the program we decided that we cannot let this continuing and my husband spoke to the boyfriend's parents and the boy himself. He just said that she was 14 and they needed to be supervised. I do not regret this step. But it happened that he spoke to his parents when she was completely unaware and babysitting her brother. Needless to say she was very hurt and felt betrayed by us.

After that we are trying really hard to keep being firm and give her the consequences of her bad choices. Meanwhile we encourage all the small positive steps that she does.

It is a really long list how many boundaries she pushed in the last 3-4 weeks:

- \*violting curfew
- \* skipping school for 4 days
- \*smoking in the house
- \*asking for a lift to her best friend's in the night for sleepover just we to realise the next morning that they both disappeared that night and came 8 am in her fiends house
- \*leaving the house without telling anyone
- \*being really rude and calling us names and swearing
- \* taking all the pills from our cabinet (paracetamol and aspirin)

Only by the Lord's grace I am still sane.

I can see that my husband's patience is running over. He started to rage at her.

On the few occasions when she was able to talk to me she said that she frankly hates us and she really hates her father. They never had a good relationship but now it is a nightmare. I keep reminding myself that the things are expected to get worse before get better. It seems that my husband lost the hope to establish a healthy relationship with our daughter and to see her growing into a responsible adult.

Can you give me some practical tips how to diffuse the hatred between them.

I cannot understand whether she realises that her behavior cannot be tolerated as it is now or she is still in her angry state not accepting the consequences because she just hates this family and refuses to follow the rules in the family.

Thank you for your support.

M.

.....

Hi M.,

As a parent, you want to do everything for your child but you have to realize that sooner or later, they must do things on their own. They have to learn about how to earn their own money, how to manage it, and how to make smart financial decisions with it. The longer

you keep on handing everything to your children, the harder it will be for them to learn these crucial life skills and lessons on their own and that will severely backfire on them in their adult life.

I think as children grow older, you have to say "No" more frequently, and make them work hard for the things they want to have, because you have to teach them the value of hard work, the value of a dollar, the virtue of patience, of delayed gratification, etc., or else they will never learn and that's a greater disservice to them in the long run.

People whose parents didn't provide them with everything usually appreciate the things they have more. They have to work hard in order to get those things they need on their own, which usually makes them more financially responsible, more responsible in general, harder workers, etc. I 'm not saying that ALL people whose parents didn't provide them with everything will turn out like that -- nor am I saying that those people whose parents provided them with everything cannot also garner those same qualities.

All I'm saying is that those whose parents did not provide them with everything have a greater opportunity to develop those crucial life skills that are critical in adult life simply because they need to. Those who got everything handed to them usually don't have that need to develop those crucial life skills, so they don't spend time cultivating them.

What's my point?

Don't spend any time or energy worrying about trying to be "the good guy." You are not a "buddy."

Your job is to help your daughter foster the development of "self-reliance." And you are totally powerless over whether or not she chooses to harbor resentment based on your more assertive parenting style.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Daughter

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:45AM (-07:00)

## Top 100 Sites for "Parenting Teens"

Wednesday, June 03, 2009

*MyOutOfControlTeen.com*

### **10 Parenting Tips for Raising Teenagers**

4 Parents Home

ACA Publications - Expectations - *Parenting Children and Teens With ...*

*Active Parenting of Teens* - Third Edition

Boarding School, Troubled *Teens*, *Parenting Advice*, Tips, Alternative Boarding Schools, Troubled *Teens* Boot Camps, Residential Treatment ...

Deep South Moms: *Parenting Teens* is Hazardous and My Food Baby

Goals 2000 and Pregnant and *Parenting Teens*: Making Education ...

Healthy *Teen* Network -- Pregnant & *Parenting Teens*

Heartlight | Christian Boarding School | Troubled *Teen* Help

Helping *parenting teens* graduate | Philadelphia Public School Notebook  
Home: *Parenting Teens*/Pre-teens articles in IdeaMarketers Directory  
Houston *Parenting Teenagers* Examiner  
**Ideals Versus Reality for *Parenting Teens*: Advice for *Parenting ...***  
Natural *Parenting - Parenting teens* and young children  
NRCFCPPP: Pregnant and *Parenting Teens*  
Online Course: Solution Focused *Parenting* with Difficult *Teens ...*  
Online help for *parenting* troubled *teenagers*, rebellious *teens ...*  
Parent & Family Resources for *Teens*  
*Parenting Addicted Teens* - Adolescent Drug Rehab Substance Abuse ...  
*Parenting Advice for Teenagers* (Children 12-18) - FamilyEducation.com  
*Parenting Angry Teens* | Psych Central  
*Parenting Children & Teens*  
*Parenting Teenagers* - Raising Adolescents - Dealing with *Teens*  
*Parenting Teenagers* Online Class | *Parenting Teens* | Certificates  
*Parenting Teens*  
*Parenting Teens* — Blogs, Pictures, and more on WordPress  
*Parenting Teens* - Child & Family WebGuide  
*Parenting Teens* - HealthyPlace  
*Parenting Teens* (12-17) Help - Forums and Discussions - MedHelp  
*Parenting Teens* and other *parenting* resources - FamilyEducation.com  
*Parenting Teens* Blog  
*Parenting Teens* for Cambodians A Model Curriculum  
*Parenting Teens* Info

**50 Best *Parenting* Books for Families with *Teens* and Tweens ...**

**Focus Adolescent Services: Help Your *Teen* and Heal Your Family**

**Focus Adolescent Services: *Parenting Teens***

**Free *Parenting* Tips for Parents of *Teens* - Help with *Teenagers***

**Impact Newsletter: Feature Issue on *Parenting Teens* and Young ...**

**LD OnLine :: *Parenting Teens* with ADHD Made Simple**

**Librarians' Internet Index *Parenting Teens***

**NY *Parenting Teens* Examiner**

***Parenting My Teen***

***Parenting* Resources Troubled *Teens* Boarding Schools Military Boot ...**

***Parenting Teens***

***Parenting Teens* - Parents of *Teenagers* Find Help Raising *Teens***

***Parenting Teens* Info**



[Parenting Teens is Both Joy and Challenge - University of](#)

...

[Parenting Teens Online](#)

[Parenting Teens Resource Network](#)

[parenting teens talk radio podcast](#)

[Parenting Teens With ADHD](#)

[Parenting Teens With Love And Logic, Foster Cline, Book - Barnes ...](#)

[Parenting teens, troubled teens, WHEN TO WORRY, self-injury, teens ...](#)

[Parenting Teens: A Field Guide - Google Books Result](#)

[Parenting Teens: Be a Parent, Not a Pal](#)

[Parenting Teens: Information on \*teen\* culture, \*teen\* discipline ...](#)

[Parenting Teens: Tips on \*Parenting Violent Teens\* | Suite101.com](#)

[Parenting Tips and Advice for \*Teen\* Problems & Everyday Life ...](#)

[Parenting tips for \*teens\*: Encouraging responsible behavior](#)

...

[Parenting Today's \*Teens\* Radio with Mark Gregston](#)

[Parenting Today's \*Teens\* \(with Mark Gregston\) - Today's Broadcast](#)

[Parenting Troubled \*Teens\*](#)

[Parenting Troubled \*Teens\* | Suite101.com](#)

[Parenting Troubled \*Teens\* and Setting Family Rules](#)

*Parenting Your Teens with T.L.C.: The "Time-Limits-Caring" Way to ...*

*Parenting: Teaching Responsibility to Preteens, Teens*

ParentingTeensToday.com: ADVICE FOR *PARENTING TEENAGERS*

PLEASE STOP THE ROLLERCOASTER - Tips and Tools for Successfully ...

Pregnant and *parenting teens* celebrate academic successes ...

*Pre-teens & Teens -- All About Parenting and Teenagers ...*

Progressive *Parenting* Solutions - *Parenting* skills and child ...

**Raising Successful *Teenagers***

Research Center: State Policies Toward Pregnant and *Parenting Teens*

Research: Teaching *Parenting* Skills Helps *Teens* Genetically Prone ...

Saint Mary's School | Essential Understandings for *Parenting Teens ...*

Senior Prom Safety For *Teens*: Safety Tips For Parents and High ...

Shoulder to Shoulder | Raising *Teens* Together

StorkNet's *Parenting Teens* Cubby

***Teen* Parents: Nutrition Curriculum for Pregnant and *Parenting Teens***

*Teen* Pregnancy, Childbirth, *Parenting* Support, Doula Supporting ...

***Teenagers* and *Parenting* Information**

[Teens - Parenting Teens - Communicating With Teenagers](#)

[Teens : Parenting 24/7 | University of Illinois Extension](#)

[Teens, parents, and stress \(OneNewsNow.com\)](#)

[Teens: Parental interference vs. \*parenting\* - Adolescence - Helium](#)

[Timeless \*Parenting\* Advice for Toddlers through \*Teenagers\*](#)

[Tips for \*Parenting Teens\* Three Alternatives To Saying](#)

[Troubled \*Teen\* | Struggling \*Teens\* | Family Support | \*Parenting\* ...](#)

[Troubled \*Teen\* Solutions | \*Parenting\* Advice, Behavior Problem ...](#)

[Understanding and \*parenting teenagers\*: Making rules and setting ...](#)

[Yahoo! Groups : Directory : \*Parenting Teens\*](#)

Posted by Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:01PM (-07:00)

[We had a blow out the other day because of a pierced lip...](#)

[Friday, June 05, 2009](#)

Hi Mark,

I just purchased your program today. I am going to try and make this brief. My daughter has been with father for the last 4 months we have 50/50 custody. Recently she has talked about moving back and going to her old school. We had a blow out the other day because of a pierced lip that her father allowed her to get knowing this is not allowed in my house. I would also not get her a dress that night. She hit me called me bad names and was out of control. I called her father and said I would be picking her up Sunday night and am going back to 50/50 custody because of how she felt I have no control over her behavior. My problem is this program takes about 4 weeks and this Sunday is days away. My question is should I not pick her up and let her stay with her father if that is what she so desires and explain I love her and this would be her choice to live with her father instead of being with me and the rules at our house. Or should I pick her up Sunday night and really try to get through this program while she is here week on week off? Because I have no have time to go through the program I don't know what would be best.

Your help is greatly appreciated,

S.

.....  
Hi S.,

When this situation arises, the typical scenario (in brief) looks something like this:

1. Child goes to father's house to live (greener grass myth)...
2. About a 2 to 4 week "honeymoon period" is experienced in the new home (i.e., things go very well at first)...
3. Then the child begins to behave (i.e., misbehave) the same way she behaved in previous home...
4. Father cannot successfully address the misbehavior and sends the child back to mom...

Having said this, I think it would be good for you and your daughter to have a time-out from one another. Take advantage of the opportunity to get a break (albeit a short one).

Mark

MyOutOfControlTeen.com

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:06AM (-07:00)

## How to Create a Home-Rules Contract

Monday, June 08, 2009

Mark:

I am mainly worried about one of my son's friends who coached him about a lot of negative things, now this friend will be taken off the street soon, either go to juvenile detention or to go to another state, so he won't be around much longer.

Now my current problem is I have issued consequences to my son for being coming home late, such as suspending his cell phone, taking away his game controllers, grounding him. The 1st one I have control over, the 2nd one I don't have control anymore, now he hides his controller before he leaves the house, the 3rd one he totally ignores. I told him he is grounded for 1 day since he didn't come home on time, but his friends just come to our house and pick him up, he sneaks out of the house one way or the other, so what do I do now?

I want to print out all the rules for the house, the privileges and consequences for him, so he knows exactly what to expect for his actions. Do you have a sample for those things?

Thank you!

.....

Hi S.,

Here's a way to create your own "home-rules" contract. There's a blank template at the bottom of the page too.

Click ==> <http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/mr-rulescontract.html>

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:50AM (-07:00)

## Top 50 Schools for Troubled Teens

Monday, June 08, 2009

Boarding School Directory Blog " Troubled Teen Schools

Boarding School, Troubled Teens, Parenting Advice, Tips, Alternative

Boarding Schools for Troubled Boys — Troubled Teen Ministries

Boarding Schools for Troubled Teenaged Girls Boys and Teenagers

Boarding Schools for Troubled Teens

Camps and Programs for Christian Teens, Troubled Teen Help, Schools for ...

Christian Boarding Schools for Troubled and Struggling Teens, Boys and ...

Help For Troubled Teens, Rehab, Christian Teen Challenge Boot Camp

Help Troubled Teens, Camps for Teen Parents, Schools Troubled Teens

Military Boarding Schools BootCamps Wilderness Programs Treatment ...

Military Schools - Troubled Teens

Military Schools for Troubled Teens

National Youth Network - Wilderness Therapy - Boarding Schools ...

Our Troubled Teen - Boarding Schools and Teen Programs

Schools for Troubled Teens

Schools for Troubled Teens: 3 Things to Know About Schools for Troubled ...

Silverado Boys Ranch - Home

Struggling Teens, Schools for Troubled Teens, Christian Teens Help ...

Teen Boarding Schools - Info on Therapeutic, Military, and Private ...

Teen Help

Teen Help - Specialty Boarding Schools

Teen Program.info - Private School and Troubled Teen Program Research ...

Teen Values - Boarding Schools for Troubled Teens

Teens Schools and Programs, Troubled Teens School, Struggling Teens Camps

Therapeutic Boarding School for Troubled Teens and Residential ...

Therapeutic Boarding Schools for Troubled Teens

Therapeutic Boarding Schools for Troubled Teens Residential Treatment ...

Top Flight Academy: Residential Boarding School for Troubled Teen Boys

Troubled Teen - Issues, Suicide, Depression, Pregnancy

Troubled Teen Help - Teen Boarding Schools - Parenting Advice

Troubled Teen Help Military Boarding Schools

Troubled Teen Resource

Troubled Teen School

Troubled Teen School - Residential Programs | Three Springs

Troubled Teen School Consultant

Troubled Teen Schools is dedicated to helping struggling teens and ...

Troubled Teen: Home - Schools and other programs for Troubled Teens

Troubled Teen: Military Schools - Schools and other programs for ...

Troubled Teens - Bbcteens.co.uk

Troubled Teens - Expert Advice and Help from the #1 Troubled Teenager Site

Troubled Teens - Teen Help Schools and Youth Programs, Parenting Guidance

Troubled Teens - Turning Winds - Residential Treatment Program for at ...

Troubled Teens & Troubled Teen Resources

Troubled Teens & Troubled Teen Resources

Troubled Teens / Teen Home: Private Boarding School for Teens, Military ...

Troubled Teens Advice, Teens USA Boarding Schools, Treatment Center ...

Troubled Teens Schools | Schools for Troubled Teens

## Troubled Teens: Find Schools, Programs, & Help for Troubled Teens

### What Is a Troubled Teen?

YOURTROUBLEDETEENDIRECTORY.COM - A Resource for Christian Parents

==> Posted by Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:10AM (-07:00)

## I feel stronger because I'm not alone in this...

Monday, June 15, 2009

Hi Mark,

I joined OPS a week ago. As a single parent of a 15 year old daughter without any support I have tendency to panic whenever any situation arises because I'm scared she will win again. Now just after my first two sessions I feel stronger because I'm not alone in this.

Yesterday when I listened about all the 5 stages of Anger Ladder, I was amazed: you've described exactly what I go through with my kid from time to time . Now I know why.

Thank you,

I.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:30AM (-07:00)

## "Rebellious Teen"

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

Hello Mark,

I wish I would have known about your program 2 years ago when the problems started with Lauren. She was 15 when everything hit the fan and just celebrated her 18th birthday. I would say we're at the 3rd stage where the blow ups are less frequent and less intense. Just reading about how things were and how you suggested resolving them let me see where I made my mistakes as a parent and how I actually am doing better now than I thought. Even though Lauren has made some positive changes in her life and attitude I am able to see now how everything went to pot in the first place. She is the youngest of 4 and there are 9 years between her and her sister who is third and her brothers are 12 and 15 years older. I think I felt bad that Lauren was an "only child" and gave in a lot of times where I never would have with my other kids. I got caught up in the emotional tug of war and we did go to therapy and I ended up being the one who continued to go to assure myself that I wasn't losing my grip. Even though our situation isn't as bad as it was I can see that your program will still provide me and my husband with many tools to continue on the right path. I finished Session 1 today and plan on listening to the audio, watching the videos and reading the e book a few times this week.

I'm not sure what made me type "rebellious teen" into the search bar last night but I'm so glad that I did.

B.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:45AM (-07:00)

## Abuse by Brother

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Hi Mark,

Let me start by saying thanks. Not that we are into the program enough to have had any changes occur, but because you have opened my eyes to how I may have contributed to my sons behaviour and more importantly, the basic things I can do (which my husband says is common sense!) to help him and our family. I must be one of a few, that for me, it wasn't part of my make up and I didn't have these ideas naturally. Needless to say, I have over compensated on nurturing, thinking that I was guiding and educating with an open mind and respect for these 'little people' and have sort of let them down.

All will change soon, and my 12 yr old son (C\_\_\_) is crying out for more structure and guidelines. Just to give you a heads up, he has been diagnosed with 'Aspergers Traits' and an exceptional IQ which sometimes makes our task a little more trying! C\_\_\_ actually skipped a grade at primary school, and has just started secondary school this year.

My question in the chat was concerning siblings. C\_\_\_'s younger brother is the polar opposite of C\_\_\_. He is compliant, respectful (as far as 10yr olds go), intuitive, empathetic etc, etc. He is young though in some of his ways and really cops a lot of verbal abuse and physical abuse from C\_\_\_. He is often in tears about this and even though his heart says 'I love my brother', he is really having a battle because he can't bear the treatment he gets.

I positively encourage him and thank him for his tolerance and patience etc. and describe that C\_\_\_ sees the world differently to him and that we are trying to help with this, but my heart breaks when it happens and I want him to feel a bit more empowered with the situation, rather than a 'victim'.

I am in Australia Mark, and it is 10.30am here. We are currently in the midst of a sleepover Birthday party for C\_\_\_, as the 14th June is his 12th birthday however, like most years, we have had a heated discussion & incidents whether his friends are present or not. We may have a cross over in time zones but I hope you can give me some advice.

.....  
.....

Sibling rivalry issues are covered in the Q & A blog: [www.OnlineParentingCoach.com](http://www.OnlineParentingCoach.com)

I'll copy and paste:



“Ignoring” behavior is an over-rated parenting strategy – but when it comes to sibling rivalry – it is often the best strategy. Here’s a two-part plan:

1. Don't take sides. If you intervene in squabbling, it should never be on one side or the other. Never intervene on one side or the other unless there is possible harm. By harm I mean the possibility of causing injury, not minor pain. Say, "The two of you stop it" ...rather than, “Michael, stop hitting your brother” (which sounds like you’re taking sides).
2. Never listen to what went on. And I mean never. Again, the only exception is if there is potential harm to one or the other child.

When rivalry is present, here are the four common issues that kids are really fighting about:

1. Expressing competition. We live in a competitive society and sibling rivalry is an extension of that. It’s a way for kids to compete with each other and learn how to manage their own competitive behavior.
2. Getting a parent’s attention. This is the most common issue that spurs sibling fighting.
3. Jealousy. One sibling may be jealous of the other (what the other one has, how the other one looks, or how well the other one does in school).
4. Teasing. Sibling fighting may take the form of teasing. By doing this, they test the limits of what’s socially acceptable. In the family, kids can test what they can say by judging what kind of pain it causes. Though children may learn important lessons about how to interact with other people, there are other ways to learn that are less hurtful.

Here’s a list of helpful tips that parents can use to reduce or stop sibling rivalry:

- Avoid favoritism. Some researchers believe that perceived favoritism is the greatest cause of sibling rivalry. So avoiding it helps immensely. This can be challenging since parents may favor certain traits in teenagers over other traits. That means teenagers who have the favored traits become favored.

Hint #1: Pay attention to each child and determine what kind of attention is needed. Consider that teenagers are different and need different things at different times. An exact minute for minute accounting of your attention is not essential. Sometimes a child may require some extra time.

Hint #2: Give each child his or her own special time with you. During this time, make sure no one else is around to compete for your attention.

- Don’t take sides, don't be the judge. When they’re fighting, tell the kids, “I want you two to work this out,” and walk away. Don’t get involved in the fight.

- Don't pay attention to the fight; stay out of it. If they are fighting for your attention and you don't get involved, they will learn other, hopefully better ways to get your attention.

- Know when to intervene. Sibling rivalry can develop into abuse if one sibling regularly victimizes the other. If you follow all of the above, this probably will not happen. But if you’re still struggling with this situation, be alert. Check to see if someone is really getting

hurt and who's too helpless to stop the abuser. The abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual. If it's going on, your response must be prompt and significant. This must not be allowed. If you can't stop the abuser yourself, seek outside help—a counselor, a friend of family member, or the police or other authorities if you can't stop it any other way.

- Make clear that ongoing conflict is unacceptable. When the fighting has stopped, say something to the rivals like, "I'm unhappy with the present level of fighting and I want you two to find a way to work this out." If a fight is just beginning, you may give the rivals a group goal so they can work together for a positive outcome.

- Offer problem-solving strategies when the teenagers are not fighting. It may be necessary to work with each child individually, but be really careful that you are not inadvertently playing into the rivalry by giving the desired attention. Offer support without saying whether the child is right or wrong. Ask what the child thinks the fight was about and how he or she might avoid this kind of fight in the future.

- Remain positive. By finding something positive about each of your teenagers on an ongoing basis, you'll reduce the level of sibling rivalry.

- Teach empathy. Empathy is the opposite of sibling rivalry. The more sensitive siblings are to each other's emotions, the less they'll challenge each other as rivals.

...More on sibling rivalry is in the audio section:  
<http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com/live1.html>

...Also, you will want to use the strategy in session #3 [online version of the eBook].

Good luck,

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:53AM (-07:00)

## I know this [program] is working...

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Mark,

Thanks, I know this is working. This morning, my son was refused his request to drive to driver's ed. He threatened that he wouldn't go. I rolled the window up and shut the engine off and grabbed my purse and opened the door without a fight and he backed down and got in the passenger side.

He said he hated both me and his dad. He is finally expressing his resentment towards his father that he's kept bottled up.

My daughter is compliant with the changes, and earned a reward yesterday to stay the night with a friend. I hadn't been as permissive with her in the past, because she's been the fighter at school, and always gotten attention thru negative behavior and my son, had

been 'the good kid'.

T.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:45AM (-07:00)

## My family is in the middle of a great deal of turmoil...

Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Dear Mark,

I just want to thank you. My family is in the middle of a great deal of turmoil. My husband of almost 25 years asked me for a divorce in November of 2008. Since then, our daughter has ran away twice, cut her arm and spent a week in an inpatient psychiatric facility, has totally changed her dress and her set of friends and has been diagnosed with depression and was placed on medications.

What I found interesting is how much she seemed to be feeding into the diagnosis of "depression" and her "anger issues". I also noticed that the medications actually made her more miserable and her defiant behavior escalated. Your ebook has helped so much and I am only in the first week!

I have fired the counselors, weaned my child off medications and I am ready to begin the work of becoming a stronger, more focused parent. My soon to be ex-husband has also agreed to purchase the program and we intend on working it together to get our daughter back on track.

I thank you for your help and guidance. Please pray for my family as I will for yours.

Sincerely,

L.

My Out-of-Control Daughter

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:47AM (-07:00)

## Your insight into teenagers is amazing...

Friday, July 03, 2009

I have purchased your e-book and cd's.... just wanted to say how amazing your work is proving to be. I work in psychiatry but have struggled to discipline my son and to understand his behaviour. I have put in to practice the first week session and already it is working. Your insight into teenagers is amazing.... it was like you had written it all for my son and I. Thank you, a thousand times, thank you. I'll keep you informed of J\_\_'s progress, my 16 year old out of control teenager!

J.

My Out-of-Control Teen  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:47AM (-07:00)

## Daughter Refuses To Work

Sunday, July 05, 2009

Hi Mark,

My 16 year old has an opportunity to work as a hostess at the restaurant I work at. They would hire her just because she is my daughter. Here's the problem, she doesn't want it. Her ugly self is out in full force over it. I am 99% sure that the reason she is creating such a fuss is because she is terrified. She cried for hours before her interview. Her self confidence is really, really low. Her dad and I know she can do the job and would do well at it, because when she puts her mind to something she does great. It's just getting her past her fears. My question is... do we force her to go to the second interview? We pretty much forced her into the first one. I have already told her that if she wants a cell phone she has to have a job to pay for it. We also created a contract for getting her driver's license. I have attached the contract. We have not signed it yet, but knows most of what is on it.

Thanks in advance for your advice!

Sincerely,

A.

.....

Hi A.,

No. I would definitely not force her -- BUT stick to your stipulation that she must get a job so she can pay for her own cell phone. Let her take "all the time she needs" to decide when/where she wants to work (a paradoxical intervention). The more responsibility you take for her employment, the less responsibility she will take (that's why you're in the rut you're in now; her work is more important to you than it is to her).

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen  
Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:10AM (-07:00)

## Daughter seems to cry all the time...

Tuesday, July 07, 2009

Our nearly 4-year-old daughter seems to cry all the time. Recently she wept because we were late picking her up and she thought we weren't coming. Once a classmate told her "You are late," so she cried. I used to get annoyed with her crying and would yell, but then I learned that encouragement and patience helped much more. However, with a full-time job I lose patience with her sometimes. We really want her to be more confident, but

have no idea of how to do this. Please help. -- C.J.

.....

First have your doctor examine her to be sure there is nothing physical that is creating her anxiety. It never hurts to be sure that nothing physical is wrong. Many young kids have ear problems that do not actually hurt, but that irritate and stress them out. These ear problems also can affect hearing, which of course affects her language and her understanding of things being said around her. DO check her hearing. Then work on her self-esteem.

Self-esteem and self-confidence is based on two important things:

- Feeling lovable for just being one's self
- Feeling competent or capable.

Moms & dads need to nurture BOTH of these things to improve self-esteem.

For example, you can nurture independence by letting her make simple choices of what to wear (of three things you lay out) or what cereal to get at the store (of three choices). These small things will help her feel capable.

If you are patient and let her dress and undress herself, and if you ask her to help out with simple chores like setting or clearing the table or sorting the clean socks, she will feel valued and competent.

Praise her for just trying to do her best at school, but don't set expectations that are too stressful.

Be sure your praise is meaningful and descriptive. Don't say "good job" repeatedly. Instead tell how you liked something she did or said, and why. For example, "I really liked the way you got dressed and were ready on time. That helps me out a lot when I am busy. Thanks." Or "I liked the way you used those colors in your painting and how you experimented with the paintbrush." Descriptive praise is much more meaningful than "That's really nice."

To nurture the youngster's feelings of being lovable, use descriptive praise that tells her you love her as she is, as a person. You can mention her sensitivity or her ability to be observant, or her sense of humor, or her great hugs. These are things that are part of her personality, and not based on achievements. Feeling lovable for "just being me" is just as important as feeling capable.

Last, talk to her teachers at the school to ask them for help in this effort and for any insight they can provide.

Ask them to bolster her confidence. Tell them exactly what you'll be doing at home to accomplish this, and ask them to do the same.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:18AM (-07:00)

# When to Ignore Child Behavior

Wednesday, July 08, 2009

"Ignoring" behavior is an over-rated parenting strategy -- however, in some cases, it is the best strategy. Thanks to more than 50 years of research, we know how to change kid's behavior. In brief, you identify the problem-behavior, define its positive opposite (the desirable behavior you want to replace it with), and then make sure that your youngster engages in a lot of reinforced practice of the new behavior until it replaces the unwanted one. Reinforced practice means that you pay as much attention as possible to the positive opposite so that your youngster falls into a pattern: Do the right behavior, get a reward (praise or a token); do the behavior, get a reward. Real life is never as mechanically predictable as that formula makes it sound, and many other factors will bear on your success—including your relationship with your youngster, what behaviors you model in your home, and what influences your youngster is exposed to in other relationships—but, still, we know that reinforced practice usually works. If you handle the details properly, in most cases a relatively brief period of intense attention to the problem, lasting perhaps a few weeks, should be enough to work a permanent change in behavior.

So, yes, you can change your youngster's conduct, but that doesn't mean you always should. When faced with a problem-behavior, first ask yourself, Can I let this go? Sometimes the answer is Hell, no! If your kid likes to spend hours at his window in full-body camo and a Sad Clown mask, tracking the neighbors in the sights of his BB gun, you'll probably want to put a stop to that right now. But a lot of behaviors fall into the lesser category of annoying but not necessarily worth addressing. Ask yourself if changing a behavior will really make a worthwhile difference in your youngster's life and your own.

Many problem-behaviors, including some that disturb moms & dads, tend to drop out on their own, especially if you don't overreact to them and reinforce them with a great deal of excited attention. Take thumb sucking, which is quite common up to age 5. At that point it drops off sharply and continues to decline. Unless the dentist tells you that you need to do something about it right now, you can probably let thumb sucking go. The same principle applies for most stuttering. Approximately 5 percent of all kids stutter, usually at some point between ages 2 and 5. Moms & dads get understandably nervous when their kids stutter, but the vast majority of these kids (approximately 80 percent) stop stuttering on their own by age 6. If stuttering persists past that point or lasts for a period extending more than six months, then it's time to do something about it.

There are a lot more behaviors, running the range from annoying to unacceptable, in this category. Approximately 60 percent of 4- and 5-year-old males can't sit still as long as adults want them to, and approximately 50 percent of 4- and 5-year-old males and females whine to the extent that their moms & dads consider it a significant problem. Both fidgeting and whining tend to decrease on their own with age, especially if you don't reinforce these annoying behaviors by showing your youngster that they're a surefire way to get your (exasperated) attention. Thirty to 40 percent of 10- and 11-year-old males and females lie in a way that their moms & dads identify as a significant problem, but this age seems to be the peak, and the rate of problem lying tends to plummet thereafter and cease to be an issue. By adolescence, more than 50 percent of males and 20 percent to 35 percent of females have engaged in one delinquent behavior—typically theft or vandalism. For most kids, it does not turn into a continuing problem.

Now, we're not saying that you should ignore lying or stealing or some other potentially serious misbehavior just because it will probably drop out on its own in good time. There's an important distinction to be made here between managing behavior and other parental motives and duties. Moms & dads punish for several reasons—to teach right and wrong, to satisfy the demands of justice, to establish their authority—that have little to do with changing behavior. You can't just let vandalism go without consequences, and it's reasonable to refuse to put up with even a lesser offense such as undue whining, but don't confuse punishing misbehavior with taking effective steps to eliminate it. Punishment on its own (that is, not supplemented by reinforced practice of the positive opposite) has been proven again and again to be a fairly weak method for changing behavior. The misbehaviors in question, minor or serious, are more likely to drop out on their own than they are to be eliminated through punishment.

Especially as your youngster gets older, more independent, and more capable of holding her own in a household struggle over behavior, you will need to practice parenting triage—asking, Is it worth drawing the line here? Be especially wary of slippery slopes, falling dominoes, and other common but not necessarily relevant rationales for intervening in your youngster's behavior.

Consider, for example, an adolescent's fantastically messy room, a typical flash point for household conflicts about things that really matter to kids and moms & dads, like autonomy and respect and the rights of the individual in relation to the family. Messiness is a habit, a set of behaviors, so it would not be difficult to define a positive opposite of mess-making, set up a system of rewards for cleaning up, and replace a bad habit with a better one. But let's first ask a basic question: Why focus on the messiness of your youngster's room? There may be good reasons to. It may be that your youngster never has presentable clothes to wear because they pile up dirty on her floor. Or her room could present a real sanitation problem, if there are dirty dishes or discarded food in there. Maybe there aren't enough clean forks in the house because they're all on her floor, in empty TV dinner trays.

These are significant matters that would need to be addressed right away, but what if the problem is not presentable clothing or sanitation or the household fork supply but just sloppiness? You could fix it, probably, but is it really that big a deal?

When you ask yourself, Why focus on it?, you may decide that it's not worth addressing the problem. Or asking Why focus on it? may help you to narrow down the problem to those elements that really do need to be addressed. Some aspects of a sloppy room may really be nonnegotiable: candles and incense near flammable material or rotting food or some other potential biohazard. If the mess is dangerous, if there are consequences for other people in the household, then it's certainly worth addressing. And, guided by your own answer to Why focus on it?, be prepared to trade an inessential for an essential. Let her keep her clothes on the floor if she does her own laundry and cleans up food mess as soon as she makes it.

Moms & dads frequently respond to Why focus on it? by expressing a worry that if they let their youngster be sloppy in her room she will be sloppy everywhere: in her personal appearance, in her schoolwork, in her career. They have fantasies about her getting fired in middle age for having a messy office. But when it comes to messiness, the slippery-slope argument is a fallacy. Having a messy room is an identifiable stage that tends to appear in adolescence and then go away. After the messy interlude of the preteen and teen years, most people return to or rise to some basic standard of neatness—a standard

very likely resembling the one you have modeled in your own housekeeping.

So if your adolescent youngster keeps herself reasonably clean and presentable, and if the problem's not so severe that it's causing other problems, consider letting slide the messiness of her room as a stage she's going through. Yes, every mom or dad will always have a story of an adult who's a genuine slob to back up the claim that not everybody recovers from adolescent messiness, but those cases are exceptions. Really, how many adults do you know who have rooms like your kid's? Not many. They grew out of it. So why move heaven and earth—and increase the amount of conflict in the house, and use up energy and goodwill perhaps better reserved for more significant matters—to correct a problem that will almost certainly self-correct?

Of course, moms & dads can have their own real reasons to object to even a little messiness in a youngster's room. It could be that you're a very tidy person, and you just can't abide it. That's a legitimate complaint, but recognize that it's not about any abnormal behavior on the part of your youngster. Be straight about it with her. Tell her that you can't live with such a mess in the house, and that, together, you're going to have to compromise on some middle ground between your standard (no mess ever, anywhere) and hers (let the clothes fall where they may). As you work out the compromise, consider that, especially if the rest of your house is neat, your youngster's messy room is an expression of autonomy and independence, normal for her stage of development. And try to remember that clutter, however much it offends you, may not belong in the same category of urgency as things that can lead to permanent consequences—like those candles right under the curtains.

What if you just ignore a problem-behavior but don't reinforce its positive opposite? Extinction—eliminating an unwanted behavior just by ignoring it—does have the virtue of not reinforcing the problem-behavior by attending to it, but it's not a very effective way to change behavior. The research shows that extinction on its own is likely to fail. And even if extinction works in the long run, the problem-behavior you're ignoring often gets worse before it starts its slow decline, so you'll need to be disciplined and patient.

When the problem-behavior does get worse before it begins to go away—a recognized effect called "extinction burst"—moms & dads often become prematurely convinced that ignoring has failed and switch over to attending to the behavior again, explaining why it's bad, punishing it, yelling, and so on. This attention to the extinction burst unwittingly makes the behavior worse in two ways. First, the mom or dad attended to a more extreme example of the behavior than usual—so, for instance, if you're trying to eliminate tantrums, you've now reinforced tantrums that register on the Richter scale. Second, the mom or dad attended to the behavior after a period of ignoring it, which is called intermittent reinforcement and helps to maintain it. Yes, you can get back on track, but you have now made your task more difficult, and ignoring is more likely than ever to fail.

Let's say you have exercised yogic self-discipline and have successfully ignored an annoying behavior to the point that it begins to go away. As you continue to ignore the behavior and it declines (very slowly), one final nasty surprise lies in wait: Just when you think success is assured, the behavior may return out of the blue, almost as bad as ever. This temporary return, a predictable late spike, makes most moms & dads who get this far decide that they have failed and go back to attending to the behavior, returning them to square one. But the final spontaneous return of the behavior, a last gasp before it disappears for good, would be short-lived if you could tie yourself to the mast and ignore it. In some especially frustrating cases, a forewarned mom or dad does find the strength



to ignore even this last onslaught, only to be undermined by a grandparent, spouse, or someone else in the house who feeds the futility by declaring defeat and jumping in to attend to the behavior.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:16AM (-07:00)

## My 16 year old son never wants to go to get his haircut...

Wednesday, July 08, 2009

Mark,

I have watched the on-line course and have been following all of your instructions. My 16 year old son never wants to go to get his haircut. I usually let it go, but has been months since the last time it was cut and at that time it wasn't cut short because he was having a fit about it. Today I told him (with my poker face) that I was taking him to get his hair cut and he said no he wasn't. I told him that if he chose to ignore my request, that he would choose the consequence of grounding and losing his cell phone for 24 hours. He refused to give me the cell phone. I told him that he was still grounded and that the 24 hours didn't start until he gave me the phone. He said he wasn't giving me the phone and then said that he was going out to his friend's house because he has all summer to be grounded. I told him if he refused to ignore my request for the 24 hour grounding and no cell phone that he would choose to be grounded for 3 days without anything. He walked out the door. My in-laws pay for his cell phone. I called them and told them to cancel the service for the time being. My question is, was that a good thing to do, or should I have waited until he comes home tonight (if he comes home) and let him give me the phone? He is very dependent on that phone to keep in contact with all his friends.

Thanks for all your help up to this point.

V.

.....  
.....

Hi V.,

*Re: My question is, was that a good thing to do, or should I have waited until he comes home tonight (if he comes home) and let him give me the phone?*

I think you handled this situation just fine, however...

Some parent-child issues fall into the "pick-your-battles-carefully" category. Those would include:

- piercings
- clothes
- haircuts
- messy rooms

- etc.

I'm guessing you have bigger fish to fry than worrying about haircuts (although I'm sure the issue is an important one for you). Many unwanted behaviors, including some that disturb parents, tend to drop out on their own, especially if you don't overreact to them and reinforce them with a great deal of excited attention.

I'm not saying that you absolutely should not fight this haircut battle -- but you may want to consider saving your strength for the more important issues.

Also, please refer to the following post in the Q & A blog on **When to Ignore Child Behavior**.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:23AM (-07:00)

## Screamfree Parenting: Raising Your Kids by Keeping Your Cool

Thursday, July 09, 2009

Screamfree Parenting: Raising Your ... - Google Books

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:49AM (-07:00)

## Top Parenting Websites According to Google [in alphabetical order]

Thursday, July 09, 2009

<http://familyfun.go.com/>

<http://loveathome.com>

<http://pediatrics.about.com/>

<http://step-parenting.com>

<http://www.aap.org/>

<http://www.collegesavings.org>

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org>

<http://www.drtoy.com>

<http://www.familydoctor.org>

<http://www.familyeducation.com/>

<http://www.family-movie-reviews.com/>

<http://www.howtobehave.com/>  
<http://www.kidshealth.org/>  
<http://www.more4kids.info/>  
<http://www.myoutofcontrolteen.com>  
<http://www.naeyc.org>  
<http://www.nea.org/parents>  
<http://www.nncc.org/>  
<http://www.parenthood.com>  
<http://www.parentingteens.com/>  
<http://www.parentpreviews.com/>  
<http://www.parents.com/>  
<http://www.ParentsforParentsMag.com>  
<http://www.parentsoup.com>  
<http://www.parentstv.org>  
<http://www.parentsworld.com/>  
<http://www.parent-teen.com/>  
<http://www.pta.org/>  
<http://www.safeteens.com/>  
<http://www.stepfamily.org/>  
<http://www.tnpc.com/>  
<http://www.ultimateparenting.com/>  
<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:38AM (-07:00)

# Communicating Effectively with Teenagers

Saturday, July 11, 2009

Are you finding raising adolescents to be difficult? If so, you are not alone. Raising adolescents in a successful way requires good communication skills. Moms & dads do not automatically possess the skills necessary to communicate with their adolescents in an effective way. Communication skills like any other kind of skill must be learned. The following tips can help you reach your adolescent and make the difficult job of raising adolescents that much easier.

Possessing a loving, evolving, healthy relationship with an adolescent means getting to know him or her as a person; this is especially important when we consider that a primary task of successfully navigating through adolescence is identity formation. Moms & dads, and anyone who works with troubled adolescents, will need to focus on taking intentional steps towards forming a meaningful relationship with the adolescent. A primary mechanism of discerning, learning, and understanding the personality characteristics and identity of a problem child is through effective communication. Effective communication incorporates a variety of skills some of which include attending behaviors, reflective listening, open and closed questions, and observation.

## Attending Behaviors—

Attending behaviors, including eye contact, vocal qualities, verbal tracking, and body language, can communicate to adolescents that you truly want to hear and understand what he or she is saying. For a troubled adolescent, it may also communicate that you care and want to connect on a personal and emotional level. Although there are cultural differences in the effective use of attending, generally direct eye contact is considered a sign that the individual being spoken to is fully present and listening. Breaks in eye contact may inform the listener in determining topics that could be uncomfortable or distressing. Vocal qualities, on the part of either the speaker or the listener, such as changes in pitch, volume, and rate of speech, can communicate care, understanding, or a lack thereof.

Verbal tracking is another attending behavior that may assist the adult in receiving the entire content or emotion that is being communicated to the adolescent. If the adolescent tends to shift topics, you, the adult, may want to pull the conversation back to a specific “track” to obtain the full narrative of a situation or concern. In addition, body language, rather than verbal exchange, is a primary means of communicating with adolescents. A person may move towards another when interested and away when uninterested or uncomfortable. To facilitate open communication with an adolescent, body language must remain authentic, relaxed, open, respectful, and convey care and a sense of attentive presence.

## Reflective Listening—

Reflective listening, such as through the use of paraphrasing, encouragers (e.g., nodding your head, saying uh-uh, repeating the last word of an adolescent’s sentence in the form of a question to encourage additional elaboration), or restating what you hear in your own words to confirm that you accurately understand the adolescent’s narrative or concern, demonstrates that you empathize and are interested. When a teen feels heard, he or she is more likely to remain open and develop trust with another. Attempt to reflect back to

the adolescent not just the content, but also the feelings underneath the content. This aids the adolescent in identifying and labeling feelings, thereby increasing insight and understanding of self.

#### Open and Closed Questions—

Through the use of open and closed questions, you may assist an adolescent in exploring ideas and experiences from a variety of angles. This also helps in developing insight and self-awareness. Asking questions such as, “What else?”, “What happened before you felt afraid or acted out in anger?”, “Was there something different going on that made you react differently?”, “Could you give me a specific example?” facilitate understanding. Closed questions may be effective in obtaining specific information and generally begin with is, are, or do. Open questions encourage additional dialogue and generally begin with what, how, why, or could. However, when communicating with an adolescent, be particularly careful with the use of questions that begin with “Why?” The use of “why” questions may create a sense of feeling attacked or judged and may place the adolescent on his or her defensive. In addition, it is often a reality that the adolescent may be unclear as to the why of a feeling or reaction. Through open questions, we can assist him or her in increased understanding of who he or she is becoming as a person; it may also inform the adolescent on what could be driving his or her behaviors and emotions.

#### Observation—

Above all, observe the reactions of the adolescent and yourself when communicating. Are your responses, body language, questions, and/or tone of voice encouraging additional sharing or resulting in the adolescent withdrawing from the exchange? What signals is the adolescent providing through body language, rate of speech, and pitch? By utilizing attending behaviors, reflective listening, open and closed questions, and observation skills, we can increase our accessibility and approachability with the adolescents we care for and work with. This improves the ability to maintain an authentic connection and provides a firm foundation for a healthy and evolving relationship. It also models effective communication skills that the adolescent may carry for the rest of his or her life.

In summary, raising adolescents takes effort in communication. If you want to communicate with your adolescent successfully, treat them as the real people they are. Get to know them through these communication techniques. Show them you are interested in them and what they are saying by using the attending behaviors outlined above. Confirm to them that you do understand what they are saying through reflective listening techniques. Use open and closed questions to help get to the root of the problems being discussed. Finally, always tailor your communication style by careful observation of your adolescent's reactions. You want to engage your adolescent in the open exchange of thoughts and feelings. By using these communication techniques, you can become more effective at raising adolescents.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:35AM (-07:00)

## Daughter Wants To Live With Father

Monday, July 13, 2009

Dear Mark...I need some advice...My 14 yr old daughter has been at her dad's all summer. In talking to her she says she does not want to come home and wants to stay with her dad. She says she likes it there, no one is bitching at her all the time and that if we make her come home she will make our lives a living hell. How do you respond to that?

J.

.....

I get this question a lot...

I always recommend that the former parent [you] allow the child to stay with the other parent [dad]. However, what usually happens is the dad eventually experiences the same parent-child conflict that the mother did, resulting in his request [or demand] that the child move back to mom's.

Bottom line: The more you convey that you "need" her to live with you -- the more she will feel a sense of what I call "retaliation gratification" [i.e., a feeling of exacting revenge against "the bitch"]. So, you should "act as if" you are comfortable with her staying a dad's. This is a paradoxical intervention. The more she feels you are "o.k." with her living at dad's -- the more she will begin to miss living with you [although she will never acknowledge this].

Say, "I love you and will miss you -- and you are always welcome to come home. Good luck at your dad's." And check-in with her every week or two [i.e., call or email].

If you force her to return -- then you will have successfully engaged in a power struggle that you will not win.

Warning: Be prepared for her eventual return [behavior contract in hand] -- but do not allow yourself to sink into a depression if she does not return.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Daughter

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:32AM (-07:00)

## Dealing With Your Out-of-Control Teenage Daughter

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

- Ask yourself, "What have I done to contribute to the rift between us?" Think about when the trouble began. How old was she and what was going on in your family life? I have counseled hundreds of father/mothers and daughters whose relationships were badly damaged and getting worse. For healing to begin, it was important for the father/mother

to understand what part she had in fueling the fires of defiance. If you're willing to take an honest look at yourself, you will find some answers.

- **Avoid Blame.** While some people claim that when a daughter is rebellious her father/mother is to blame, this usually is not true. Blaming the daughter for the difficulties does nothing to fix the problem either. There are many circumstances that contribute to the predicament.
- **Be Willing to Negotiate.** The "fix my daughter" approach won't work. Both father/mother and daughter have to be willing to negotiate and find solutions they can both live with. There are times when there's nothing you can do to get your daughter to cooperate except wait until she's ready. If your daughter obstinately refuses to work with you, realize that you can't control her behavior, but you can control your own.
- **Distinguish between Healthy and Unhealthy Rebellion.** Rebellion takes many forms, from harmless talking back to defiant acts of drug and alcohol abuse or sexual activity. As a father/mother, you have to determine which acts fall under the healthy category and which cross the line into unsafe territory. Talking back is a clue that your daughter is in the throes of her first teenage rebellion. It signals that, while she's not yet articulate enough to express herself effectively, she's struggling to find ways to assert her autonomy.
- **Try Everything.** Father/mothers often feel that they have tried everything. They are convinced that nothing will work. These negative stances won't get you out of the rut. Even though you've tried everything you can think of, that doesn't mean there isn't a solution. Often we are so close to our own problems that we can't find the obvious answers. But if you're willing to stay open and seek help, the answers will come. Get outside opinions, but be sure they apply to your situation. Listen to your daughter and your own intuition and you may be surprised with the solutions you'll discover.
- **Uncover the Roots of the Problem.** Out-of control behavior is a symptom of deeper problems. Consider how the two of you got to this point. Take a guess at the reasons your daughter is acting out. By identifying the reasons for your daughter's undesirable behavior, you'll be more apt to find the keys to correcting it. If you treat just the symptoms, the underlying trouble will still be there and will erupt again.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:55AM (-07:00)

## A Success Story

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

Hello Mark,

You cannot imagine what a relief your e-mail has been to me. Thank you for your time, understanding and support.

Unfortunately, I could not reply immediately as 'my monster' took the cable and battery of my laptop on Sunday.

Here is just a quick update of my 'weekend drama', but also I would like proudly to say 'I

made it!' thanks to you.

My son went out again with his rebellion school friend at 11.30pm. I stayed calm. He came back 2 hours later and went to bed. I left everything for the morning.

In the morning I was determined not to leave him to sleep till lunch time as it had happened before. I called him and told him that if he did not get up in 10 min, was not going to have his pocket money on Monday. I did not believe it would work. He had never got up before after being called just once. I used to be coming back for 5, and 5 and 5 more min...But soon after that, I heard the door of the bathroom opening and my son already....dressed.

Next success for the day- he helped with lunch and set the table. I cannot remember how long for it had not been done. Then we had 1 hour lunch, including a conversation mostly about mobile phones-what kind of them was 'the best one'. I was asking questions about them (what could I do, if that was the main topic of interest of my son...) It looked like one of the happiest lunches in my life...

But what happened next...As soon as we put the dishes away, 'my monster' decided to try to go back on the track again...'Where is my TV remote control? I want it back!' I stayed calm, 'You will get it on Tuesday. I will not repeat again. I will not argue.' Then in front of my eyes the cables of my laptop were taken, my purse was taken, as well as my mobile and home phone. The outside handle of my son's door was taken off so that I could not enter his room and all my important possessions were hidden. If it was only some months ago, I was going to be very upset and crying and trying to get everything back. I did not react at all-nothing happened...I went to my bedroom and started reading newspaper.

There were a couple of long, long hours...Then the door of my bedroom opened carefully. I was pretending to sleep...I had to be checked (Why there was not reaction? Strange...Boring...What happened to my mom....) Then half an hour later, the door opened again-I was reading a book, did not react again...I started feeling how embarrassed my son was...

Then supper time came. It appeared that there was nothing prepared. My sweet monster came to me with the words 'I am hungry', expecting that I was going to jump and make supper in a minute...as I used to do...But this time I did not. I said 'My purse is with you; I do not have money and therefore cannot get what we need for supper. You better give my possessions back otherwise the consequences are also to be that I am not going to collect your mobile phone from school on Monday.'

My son was also 'adamant' 'I will give you your things back, if you give me my TV remote back.' I thought myself, 'At this point I used to give up ...and.... created my monster.' But I did not this time. I stayed calm and insisted that the remote was going to be given back on Tuesday. Then I was told 'Stop playing this game with me...I am playing it at school, why at home again...You did not make it yourself...Who gave you the idea? You are not such a creature...Stop doing that to me....'

And I replied 'I do not play games. I have never played games .I am only helping you. I only want you to believe yourself again. When did you lose your confidence?'The answer was straightforward '3 months ago.'3 months ago my son was moved from one tutor group to another as 'the leader' of the disruptive children in his previous tutor group. I still



cannot figure out if this was the right decision, as I sometimes think that this made the thinks worse and increased my son's anxiety. I do not know...

That night we did not get to a solution my possessions to be given back, but I felt that I won, for the first time in many, many years. And I was right.

In the morning I was given everything back and promised the door handle to be put back again. The remote control is still with me... back to my son tomorrow, as was once said, without any changes and maybe this time.

Perhaps it is too early to celebrate. I definitely know it is. I will face many, many other difficulties and challenges for sure, but I am determined to succeed, to get everything to the very end, to be consistent. It does not matter what it would cost me.

I have already lost too much with my child. I know, it is not going to be easy, especially as I am on my own now. My husband has gone to work 250 miles away, on the south coast, as his previous company closed. I have got his support, but he is not at home every day. My job also is very demanding-I work in Emergency Department now and I created a ....demanding child...I am happy that I started all this during my week off, otherwise I do not know how I would cope with everything...But I am determined to do it. And thank you for giving me the opportunity to do something really precious for my child (the only one).

God bless you and what you do.

Kind Regards

K.

My Out-of-Control Son

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:22AM (-07:00)

## Another "Parenting" Success Story

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

Mark,

Thanks so much for this wonderful program. It took me longer to complete than 4 weeks, but I kept at it.

I realized today that my son's addiction to online games is under control, he's turned to his X box games and I haven't been requiring him to earn this reward. I took the controller today. We still have alot of work to do, and but he's really come around. He has really been working hard and helping me outside.

My 14 yr old daughter fixed our riding lawn mower last night by herself! She put the belt back on, and fixed the deck so its level. She asked me to come outside - but I explained I had dinner on the stove and couldn't leave it. She remained calm and fixed it and mowed the front yard. I praised her and told her how great that was and that I couldn't do it on my own. I asked her to show me how she did it.

We're making progress.

T.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:42AM (-07:00)

## Thank you for your e-mail and encouragement...

Friday, July 17, 2009

Hello Mark,

Thank you for your e-mail and encouragement.

I am going through all the weekly sessions very carefully, reading everything, watching everything and implementing it as guided. We are now in week 2 and I would like only to say how I am getting on with the situations with the help of the programme.

Literally, I would say that I feel like learning how to play a piano. I have the notes in front of me, I have my teacher and now it is just up to me how I am going to perform. What I have figured out for myself is that:

-I need to know my notes very well, read again and again and try to get to the very inside of the 'music';

-I need to shape myself in a way which is going to help me to touch the keyboard with the right intensity-not too strong, not too quick, but just right, allowing me to live with the music and to feel it....

If I miss something, music sounds false. That is what happened one day when I forgot to praise my child for his good behaviour at school, but I did not forget to put restrictions on him because he did not obey and took a pound from my purse in front of me when I told him that I was not going to give him pocket money for that day for another reason. After school that day we had supper together (that happened rarely before) and he helped me cook and prepare table, but immediately afterwards decided to try his old tricks again. As I was sitting on the sofa he made a stick of a cardboard and started tapping it on my head saying 'Why are you like that? Stop listening to that people that telling you to behave in this way. I want you to get back to what you were...I do not want any changes...'I felt really upset but I did not show it. I calmly said that what he was doing was unacceptable and that we needed to sit and talk more about that. He continued for a while and then eventually we sat and talked again. I realise that my son was scared of the measures that I implemented. I explained that everything I did was to help him.

On the following day he got up and said to me 'I am normal again... 'but did not get any pocket money that morning because of his behaviour and did accept my decision without any problems. Then later on that day when I read and watched everything in the program again, I realised that I did not react to my son's good behaviour at school at all and I remembered how proud he was to show me his school report...

That day I got a phone call from my son's school to tell me how good had his behaviour been lately...I did not have anything else to do but I bought his favourite tart for dessert and we had a good evening including that he also helped with cooking and tidied his

wardrobe. I did not forget to tell him that I loved him...

This is one more opportunity also to thank you again, Mark.

Kind Regards,

K.

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:50AM (-07:00)

## Top 40 ADHD Websites

Saturday, July 18, 2009

### **Biofeedback Uses:**

Chicagoland Specialists

Neurofeedback Centers of Chicago ADHD, ADD, mood, TBI, PTSD  
[www.eegchicago.com](http://www.eegchicago.com)

Neurofeedback - Brain Map

Dr. Bonesteel, Neuropsychologist Assistant Professor, Neurology  
[nhahealth.com](http://nhahealth.com)

Neurofeedback for ADD

Where experience matters. we have the most, over 18 years  
[www.Nwbiofeedback.org](http://www.Nwbiofeedback.org)

You Dont Need Biofeedback

Stimulate your brainwaves without breaking the bank. Dont Overpay  
[www.EocInstitute.org](http://www.EocInstitute.org)

Biofeedback/Neurofeedback

32+ Yrs of Biofeedback Excellence Design-Produce-Sell 1-800-361 3651  
[www.ThoughtTechnology.com](http://www.ThoughtTechnology.com)

Biofeedback

Hunting For Biofeedback? Visit Our Biofeedback Guide.  
[kellyscornerstore.com](http://kellyscornerstore.com)

The Power Of Biofeedback

Mayo Clinic Says Biofeedback Safe & Effective. The Power Of The Mind  
[www.Binaural-Beats.com](http://www.Binaural-Beats.com)

Neuropsychologist

Neuropsych Testing; Counseling EEG Neurofeedback-Biofeedback  
[www.Neuro-doc.net](http://www.Neuro-doc.net)

Biofeedback in N.Y.C.

Clinical Psychologist Providing Biofeedback on Upper West Side.  
[www.AlfredKleinbaum.com](http://www.AlfredKleinbaum.com)

Biofeedback guide

Looking to find Biofeedback? See our Biofeedback guide.  
[kaufmansarmynavy.com/copy.html](http://kaufmansarmynavy.com/copy.html)

### **ADHD Food:**

Neurofeedback for ADD

No one in Chicagoland has the breadth of experience than us  
[nwbiofeedback.org](http://nwbiofeedback.org)

Natural ADHD Remedy

Expert Advice on Ways to Treat ADHD Naturally. Guaranteed Results.  
[www.NativeRemedies.com](http://www.NativeRemedies.com)

Adhd Food Diet

Need Help With Adhd Food Diet? Get All The Information Today.  
[AdhdDiet.Kidica.com](http://AdhdDiet.Kidica.com)

Attention deficit issues?

Center for Children and Families offers assessment, treatment  
[ccf.erikson.edu](http://ccf.erikson.edu)

Drug Free Neurofeedback

Research-Based Approach Local Specialists and Video Intro  
[www.eegchicago.com](http://www.eegchicago.com)

Adhd Adults

Hunting For adhd adults? Visit our adhd adults guide.  
[naturesintentionsnaturopathy.com](http://naturesintentionsnaturopathy.com)

Adult Attention Disorder

Adult Attention Deficit Information Symptoms, Treatments and More  
[for-add-adhd.info](http://for-add-adhd.info)

Learning & ADHD Testing

Neuropsychological testing of ADHD & learning problems in children  
[www.MidwestNeuropsychology.com](http://www.MidwestNeuropsychology.com)

ADHD Teen Boarding School

36 Years of Proven Success Helping Under Motivated and Add/Adhd Teens.  
[O CRS.com/Arizona-Boarding-School](http://O CRS.com/Arizona-Boarding-School)

Shocking Side Effects

Warning - Don't Take Any ADD Drugs Until You Read This Free ADD Report  
[ADHD.3StepsADD.com](http://ADHD.3StepsADD.com)

**ADHD Teen:**

Neurofeedback for ADD

No one in Chicagoland has the breadth of experience than us  
[nwbiofeedback.org](http://nwbiofeedback.org)

Eckerd Youth Alternatives

Get Help today. Teen Residential Wilderness Programs. Contact Us.  
[www.EckerdAcademy.org](http://www.EckerdAcademy.org)

Arizona Boarding School

Undermotivated Teens, ADD/ADHD, and Other Learning Challenges.  
[O CRS.com/Co-Ed-Boarding-School](http://O CRS.com/Co-Ed-Boarding-School)

Troubled Teen Options

Options for Struggling Teens! Free Brochures, Directory, Articles  
[www.HelpMyTeen.net](http://www.HelpMyTeen.net)

Teen Boot Camp

Find Boot Camps For Teens. Get Help For Your Teen Now.  
[MyTroubledTeen.com](http://MyTroubledTeen.com)

School for Troubled Teens

Private Residential Treatment Program for Boys ages 13-17.  
[www.silveradoboysranch.com](http://www.silveradoboysranch.com)

Teen Failing School?

Compassionate, boot camp alternative. Special ed. support  
[www.thefamilyschool.com](http://www.thefamilyschool.com)

Schools For Troubled Teens

Locate Schools For Troubled Teens. Get Reliable Advice In Your Area.  
DoTellAll.com

Don't Send Your Teen Away

Get control. Quickly learn how to set limits & communicate w/ teens.  
www.TheTotalTransformation.com

Troubled Christian Teen?

Acclaimed live-in program & school lovingly mentors & counsels teens.  
HeartlightMinistries.org

### **ADHD Supplements:**

Treat ADHD Herbally

Natural Remedy for ADHD and Its Symptoms. Guaranteed Results.  
ADHD-information.org

Focus Formula™

Natural Treatment Option for ADHD in Children and Adults.  
www.NativeRemedies.com

Vitamin guide

Looking to find Vitamin? See our Vitamin guide.  
Spectrum-Health.org

Natural Cure for ADHD

Dr Saunders Patients are Proof! How to Treat ADHD Naturally, No Drugs.  
www.BartonPublishing.com/TreatADHD

Puritan's Pride Vitamins

Buy Wholesale Supplements Online & Save! Ships Fast, Buy 1 Get 2 Free.  
www.Puritan.com

Adhd Diet

Learn About ADHD & Find Answers To Your ADHD Questions  
Blurtit.com

Natural Vitamin Supplement

Find Natural Vitamin Supplement. The World of Vitamin Information  
VitaminShoppe.com

Adhd Diet

Information On Adhd Diet. All You Need To Know.  
[AdhdDiet.Kidica.com](http://AdhdDiet.Kidica.com)

Discount Vitamins

Large Selection Of Vitamins And Supplements. Free Shipping.  
[www.goodlivingandwellness.com](http://www.goodlivingandwellness.com)

Nutritional supplements

Private label, bulk and wholesale manufacturing and global supply.  
[www.NutriForce.com](http://www.NutriForce.com)

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 04:30PM (-07:00)

## Top 40 Autism/Aspergers Websites

Saturday, July 18, 2009

### **Autism Test:**

Asperger Answers

Find answers from others in Our free support network.  
[www.AutismSupportNetwork.com](http://www.AutismSupportNetwork.com)

Teach Autistic Children

Online NCATE Accredited B.A. & M.S. Degrees in Special Ed. Enroll Now!  
[www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu)

Sonnenberg Consultants

Autism Experts in ABA therapy Services for home and school  
[www.sonnenbergconsultants.com](http://www.sonnenbergconsultants.com)

Autism Training

Teaching and Support for Autism and Aspergers  
[autismtreatmentcenter.org/](http://autismtreatmentcenter.org/)

Autism Teaching Materials

Social stories, lesson plans, sensory activities, and more.  
[www.autisminspiration.com](http://www.autisminspiration.com)

Autism Masters Degree

Earn a Degree in Behavioral Intervention & Autism 100% Online!  
[www.UMassOnline.net](http://www.UMassOnline.net)

Help Your Autistic Child

A new image exchange system using real photo images.  
[www.elliecards.com](http://www.elliecards.com)

Little Girls Autism Story

Amazing Autism success story from a little girls mother. Read more  
[www.bodyhealth.com/](http://www.bodyhealth.com/)

Shema Kolainu

School & Center for Children with Autism  
[shemakolainu.com/](http://shemakolainu.com/)

Autism Learning Products

Unlock Your Child's Potential For Language Using Vocab DVDs. Order!

[www.BabyBumblebee.com/Autism](http://www.BabyBumblebee.com/Autism)

### **Autism Symptoms:**

Infant Autism Symptoms

Search multiple engines for infant autism symptoms

[www.webcrawler.com](http://www.webcrawler.com)

Autism Research

Share your family's experiences online with autism researchers.

[IANProject.org](http://IANProject.org)

Asperger Answers

Find answers from others in Our free support network.

[www.AutismSupportNetwork.com](http://www.AutismSupportNetwork.com)

Children Autism Symptoms?

Identify Now 13 Symptoms of Autism In Children. Proven Email Report.

[Essential-Guide-To-Autism.com](http://Essential-Guide-To-Autism.com)

Sonnenberg Consultants

Autism Experts in ABA therapy Services for home and school

[www.sonnenbergconsultants.com](http://www.sonnenbergconsultants.com)

Little Girls Autism Story

Amazing Autism success story from a little girls mother. Read more

[www.bodyhealth.com/](http://www.bodyhealth.com/)

Special Education Degree

Earn an NCATE Accredited BA or MS in Special Education. Enroll Today!

[www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu)

Help Your Autistic Child

A new image exchange system using real photo images.

[www.elliecards.com](http://www.elliecards.com)

Autism Training

Teaching and Support for Autism and Aspergers

[autismtreatmentcenter.org/](http://autismtreatmentcenter.org/)

Autism Masters Degree

Earn a Degree in Behavioral Intervention & Autism 100% Online!

[www.UMassOnline.net](http://www.UMassOnline.net)

### **Autism Videos:**

Asperger Answers

Find answers from others in Our free support network.

[www.AutismSupportNetwork.com](http://www.AutismSupportNetwork.com)

Understanding ASDs

Learn about the latest treatment options and research findings

[IANProject.org](http://IANProject.org)

Sonnenberg Consultants

Autism Experts in ABA therapy Services for home and school

[www.sonnenbergconsultants.com](http://www.sonnenbergconsultants.com)

Online Special Ed Degree

Special Education Degrees. Bachelor or Master Programs. Sign Up Now!

[www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu)

Autism Training



Teaching and Support for Autism and Aspergers  
[autismtreatmentcenter.org/](http://autismtreatmentcenter.org/)  
Child Autism Diagnosis?  
Language Learning Tools For Autism & PDD. Help Your Child - Order Now!  
[www.BabyBumblebee.com/Autism](http://www.BabyBumblebee.com/Autism)  
Autism Masters Degree  
Earn a Degree in Behavioral Intervention & Autism 100% Online!  
[www.UMassOnline.net](http://www.UMassOnline.net)  
Autism Teaching Materials  
Social stories, lesson plans, sensory activities, and more.  
[www.autisminspiration.com](http://www.autisminspiration.com)  
Little Girls Autism Story  
Mother's testimonial of her girl's success with natural supplements  
[www.bodyhealth.com/](http://www.bodyhealth.com/)  
Shema Kolainu  
School & Center for Children with Autism  
[shemakolainu.com/](http://shemakolainu.com/)

### **Aspergers Diagnosis:**

Asperger Answers  
Find answers from others in Our free support network.  
[www.AutismSupportNetwork.com](http://www.AutismSupportNetwork.com)  
Aspergers Signs &Symptoms  
Help Your Loved One Be Happy & Feel Content In Who He Is. Free Guide!  
[www.AspergersSociety.org](http://www.AspergersSociety.org)  
Look Me in the Eye  
My life with Aspergers Insightful, inspiring, hopeful  
[www.johnrobison.com](http://www.johnrobison.com)  
Aspergers Syndrome  
The Truth On Your Aspergers Child That Doctors Are Not Telling You!  
[ParentingAspergers.com](http://ParentingAspergers.com)  
Learning Disability Test  
Does Your Child Have Dyslexia? Take Our Online Assessment Today!  
[www.VerticyLearning.org](http://www.VerticyLearning.org)  
Teach Autistic Children  
Online NCATE Accredited B.A. & M.S. Degrees in Special Ed. Enroll Now!  
[www.wgu.edu](http://www.wgu.edu)  
Autism Training  
Teaching and Support for Autism and Aspergers  
[autismtreatmentcenter.org/](http://autismtreatmentcenter.org/)  
Aspergers Syndrome guide  
Looking to find Aspergers Syndrome? See our Aspergers Syndrome guide.  
[Spectrum-Health.org](http://Spectrum-Health.org)  
Sonnenberg Consultants  
Autism Experts in ABA therapy Services for home and school  
[www.sonnenbergconsultants.com](http://www.sonnenbergconsultants.com)  
Asperger's Education  
College is possible with CLE. Support you need to succeed.  
[www.cleinc.net](http://www.cleinc.net)

## Top 30 Bullying Websites

Saturday, July 18, 2009

- [18 and Under - At Last, Facing Down \*Bullies\* \(and Their Enablers ...](#)
- [ABC News: \*Bullying\* story](#)
- [Bullied to death: They committed suicide because of \*bullying\*](#)
- [Bully in sight: how to predict, resist, challenge and combat ... -](#)
- [Bully Online](#)
- [Bully OnLine: \*bullying\* in the workplace, school, family and ...](#)
- [Bullying](#)
- [Bullying - FREE powerpoints, interactive activities games, lessons ...](#)
- [Bullying — National Crime Prevention Council](#)
- [Bullying - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
- [Bullying | American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry](#)
- [Bullying | LIVESTRONG.COM](#)
- [Bullying <>](#)
- [Bullying Information Center | Education.com](#)
- [bullying prevention tips, mental health information center](#)
- [Dealing With \*Bullying\*](#)
- [Education World®: Special Theme: \*Bullying\*](#)
- [Helping Kids Deal With \*Bullies\*](#)
- [It's My Life . Friends . \*Bullies\* | PBS Kids GO!](#)
- [Kids Against \*Bullying\*](#)
- [MedlinePlus: \*Bullying\*](#)
- [Olweus \*Bullying\* Prevention Program](#)
- [Safe Child Program \*Bullies\* Page](#)

- [SafeYouth.org - Violence Prevention Topics - \*Bullying\*](#)
- [Stop \*Bullying\* Now](#)
- [The Hill's Pundits Blog » \*Bullying\* Sotomayor](#)
- [Welcome to Bullies2Buddies.com | \*Bullies\* to Buddies](#)
- [Workplace \*Bullying\* Institute](#)
- [Workplace \*Bullying\* Stuff for Sale](#)
- [www.bullying.org](#) Where you are NOT alone! Created by Bill Belsey

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:04PM (-07:00)

## Top 40 Websites: Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)

Tuesday, July 21, 2009

1. My Out-of-Control Child
2. Brainstorm: *Oppositional* and *Defiant*--Or Critical Thinker ...
3. Conduct *Disorder* in Children and Adolescents, National Mental ...
4. Fact Sheet: *Oppositional Defiant Disorder*
5. FCS 2135/FY002: *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* (ODD)
6. Introduction to *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - Childhood Mental ...
7. MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia: *Oppositional defiant disorder*
8. Mental Health: *Oppositional Defiant Disorder*
9. *Oppositional Defiance Disorder* - *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* ...
10. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder*
11. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - Conduct *Disorder* - Aggressive *Disorder*
12. *Oppositional defiant disorder* - Disease, Condition, & Injury Fact ...
13. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - iVillage Your Total Health
14. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - My Child Has - Children's Hospital ...
15. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - New York Presbyterian Hospital

16. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - Research and Read Books, Journals ...
17. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - Symptoms, Diagnosis, Treatment of ...
18. *Oppositional defiant disorder* - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
19. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)*
20. *Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)* - MayoClinic.com
21. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD) in ...*
22. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) Support Group* - DailyStrength
23. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) Symptoms Treatment*
24. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), treatment*
25. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder / Family Village*
26. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* | AboutOurKids.org
27. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* | American Academy of Child ...
28. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* in the Yahoo! Directory
29. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder ODD*
30. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder. eMedicine Pediatrics: Developmental ...*
31. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Mental Health Disorders: Merck ...*
32. *Oppositional Defiant Support Group*
33. *Oppositional-Defiant Disorder ~ Interactive Glossary ...*
34. Parenting Resources ODD *Oppositional Defiant Disorder*
35. Psych Central: *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* Symptoms
36. Resource On *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* Created For Families By ...
37. Teen Behavior Problems and Behavioral Disorders
38. TEENS WITH PROBLEMS: Conduct *disorder* vs. *Oppositional Defiant ...*
39. Treating *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* in Primary Care: A ...
40. Treatment of *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* - Childhood Mental ...

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:21AM (-07:00)

## Disrespect, breaking curfew, grades slipping...

Saturday, July 25, 2009

Before my daughter started hanging around with 2 particular girls in her 2nd year of high school, our relationship was OK. Slowly things got bad to worse. Disrespect, breaking curfew, grades slipping ...the whole gamut. Now she is out of high school and luckily will be starting college in the fall. Using the OPS program has helped and I wish I would have known about it 2 years ago.

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:43AM (-07:00)

## Oppositional Defiant Disorder: Overview

Saturday, July 25, 2009

If your youngster is belligerent, mouthy and downright disobedient, it's time to take a closer look at the reasons why. All kids go through times when they just will not obey but the youngster with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is one who will never obey and one who will always push the family's boundaries. The youngster with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is an instigator. He loves to poke and prod and do all the tiny things behind the scenes to get his siblings in trouble. He is the youngster that challenges everything you say. Most often this youngster will not have friends.

He may or may not have trouble in the classroom. Many kids with this disorder do fine in school but act out at home. This is generally thought to be because the youngster, understanding at an early age that his behavior is not socially acceptable, can hold it together during class hours but at some point, that youngster will need release. At home, he feels safe and knows he is loved. There is no longer any need for him to hold it all in. When your youngster arrives home from school, he will often scream the entire way from the bus to the house. Once inside, the meltdown escalates until you as a parent find yourself wishing he were still at school.

Thus begins the cycle that every parent of OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER kids can relate to. You feel you are to blame. You doubt your parenting. You feel guilty for wishing the youngster had somewhere else to go. You find yourself depleted, angry and unable to cope. Following are a few things you can do to cut down on the meltdowns and take control again.

1. Establish a secure and supportive environment. A youngster with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER needs to have security. He needs to know that mom and dad will always be there for him. He needs to know that no matter how uncontrollable he becomes, you will still love him.

2. Create a schedule and stick with it. Kids need a schedule. This is especially true of the youngster with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER. He needs to know what comes next in his day. The surest way to a meltdown and uncontrollable behavior is the lack of a schedule. These kids want to know that everything follows a certain order. You may want to give your youngster his own calendar so he can track his own appointments. Use a schedule for chores and schoolwork. Your OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER youngster craves organization.

3. Set up clear and concise boundaries. Your youngster must know what will happen if he

pulls his sister's hair, or breaks all the toys in his bedroom in a fit of rage. Determine the behaviors that cause the most strife in your household and write them down. Choose three or four of them to work on. Sit down with your youngster and have him help you draw up a plan. The plan should state the unwanted behavior and then the consequence of engaging in that behavior:

- o Biting: 10-minute time-out.
- o Breaking toys: Favorite toy gets taken away for three days.
- o Kicking: 10-minute time-out.
- o Temper tantrum: Half hour in bedroom to get control of himself.

4. Be consistent. You will need to mete out the exact same discipline every time your youngster breaks the rule. If you carry through one time and you don't the next, the youngster will feel that he is in control. The most important thing to a youngster with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is to control those around him. If you let him have control, you will have lost any chance of him obeying you. Consistency is key!

5. Never shout or get angry with your youngster. A youngster with OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER literally shuts down when being yelled at. He cannot hear you. This phenomenon is discussed at length in *The Explosive Child*. Keep your voice gentle but firm, soft but authoritative.

Remember that OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is a disorder. Your youngster may want to obey and he may try very hard to obey, but he just can't summon up that sort of self-control. You can help him control his behavior by controlling his environment. Your youngster is not out to get you or to make your life miserable. When you can see OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER as a disorder rather than blatant defiance, it may be easier to put the tools in place that will help your youngster and your family live in harmony.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:31AM (-07:00)

## Parenting a Bipolar Teenager

Friday, July 31, 2009

Hello Mark,

I have downloaded your book and looked over most of it and I'm seeing a lot of helpful strategies. My husband seems to want to close his eyes and the nightmare will go away. I want to deal with the problems head on. Our son will not comply with anything we tell him. I'm scared of his violent outbursts due to many holes in our walls and doors. We have dealt with the law, med. professionals, etc.. We have diagnosis of ADHD, ODD, and bi-polar. I currently am trying to place him in a medical residential center, but it is taking months. And I don't think that we have much time left.

He currently is in an outpatient behavioral health center. He won't take the meds. The psychotherapist said that he could use residential treatment. He talks about hating his life all the time. Drugs, alcohol, sex and wrong friends are his choices. He quit school at 16 and will be 17 on 9/3/09. He said he is leaving soon. He wants to be emancipated! He currently is working less than 30hrs at a fast food rest... never saving a dime.

He is in a GED program a few hours a week. I will not allow him to get a driver's license, due to his present problems. It is difficult to give you a summary of our Son's info. I could write a book on all that we have tried to help him with over the years. Maybe you could give us some advice on how to enforce rules and what are our options when he refuses to comply. The laws are on his side. We can't tell him to hit the road, because he is still legally our responsibility. Thank you for listening and looking forward to your reply.

C.

.....

Hi C.,

The bipolar issue is the most pressing one. [CLICK HERE](#) for more info.

Also click here for a PDF file that you should read.

Mark

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:21AM (-07:00)

## I called the police...

Sunday, August 02, 2009

Hello Mark,

First of all, sincere thank you for your quick reply.

It has been just more than a week since I last wrote to you, but during that time my life changed so much.

I realised that my 'big fish' is actually a shark (grown up by myself). But I have not given up and I have been consistent with all that I need to do.

I quit my job (at least for now) but I continue with the programme. My father came to stay with me for a couple of weeks as my husband is working in another town.

What actually happened is something that I did not have even in my nightmares. And it was my mistake that I did not think about this possibility and did not prepare myself for that. My son's resistance to the new parenting style (introduced very carefully) got to his old self enough and well known weapon-physical violence. I was punched several times one day as I had to go 'back to normal' and for the first time in my life I called the police. My son was given final warning and his violent reaction is stopped now. Meanwhile, he had never witnessed nor suffered violence in our family.

There is some kind of resentment at present which is broken from time to time by brief 'sunny spells'. For the first time in my son's life he did not get what he wanted at home and for the first time in my life I was confident enough that I am doing the right thing for my child. And this is because I have now complete understanding of what have caused his behavior and for example, I do not wonder anymore why he is disrespectful most of the time.

Things are changing with ups and downs, joy and pain, but anyway they are changing and this is the most important.

I continue my job at home -- I speak, I explain and I am calm. If I had this knowledge 5 years ago, we would not get to the point where we are now and would experience much less difficulties, but there you are...

Therefore, I would say that I even more appreciate that I found in OPS and thank you again!

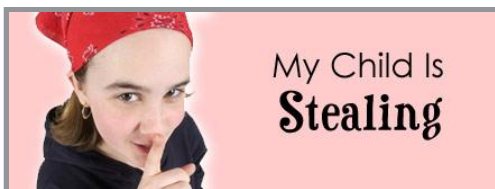
K.

Online Parent Support (OPS)

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:12PM (-07:00)

## Why Children and Adolescents Steal

Tuesday, August 11, 2009



Children of all ages — from preschoolers to adolescents — can be tempted to steal for different reasons:

- Preadolescents and adolescents know they're not supposed to steal, but might steal for the thrill of it or because their friends do. Some might believe they can get away with it. As they're given more control over their lives, some adolescents steal as a way of rebelling.
- School-age children usually know they're not supposed to take something without paying, but they might do so anyway because they lack enough self-control.
- Very young children sometimes take things they want without understanding that things cost money and that it's wrong to take something without paying for it.

And other complex reasons can be factors. Children might be angry or want attention. Their behavior may reflect stress at home, school, or with friends. Some may steal as a cry for help because of emotional or physical abuse they're enduring.

In other cases, children and adolescents steal because they can't afford to pay for what they need or want — for example, they may steal to get popular name-brand items. In some cases, they may take things to support drug habits.

Whatever the reason for stealing, parents need to find out the root of the behavior and address other underlying problems, like drug abuse, that may surface.

What Should I Do?

When a youngster has been caught stealing, a parent's reaction should depend on whether it's the first time or there's a pattern of stealing.

With very young children, parents need to help them understand that stealing is wrong — that when you take something without asking or paying for it, it hurts someone else. If a



preschooler takes a piece of candy, for instance, parents can help the youngster return the item. If the youngster has already eaten the candy, parents can take the youngster back to the store to apologize and pay for it.

With school-age children, too, it's important to return the stolen item. By the first and second grades, children should know stealing is wrong. But they may need a better understanding of the consequences.

Here's an example: If a youngster comes home with a friend's bracelet and it's clear the youngster took it without the friend's permission, the parent should talk to the youngster about how it would feel if a friend took something without asking first. The parent should encourage the youngster to call the friend to apologize, explain what happened, and promise to return it.

When adolescents steal, it's recommended that parents follow through with stricter consequences. For example, when a teen is caught stealing, the parent can take the teen back to the store and meet with the security department to explain and apologize for what happened.

The embarrassment of facing up to what he or she did by having to return a stolen item makes for an everlasting lesson on why stealing is wrong.

Further punishment, particularly physical punishment, is unnecessary and could make the youngster angry and more likely to engage in even worse behavior.

If it's a first-time offense, some stores and businesses may accept an apology and not necessarily press charges. However, some stores press charges the first time around. And there's often little sympathy for repeat offenders.

Children of all ages need to know that shoplifting isn't just about taking things from a store — it's taking money from the people who run the businesses. Plus, shoplifting makes prices higher for other customers. They should also know that stealing is a crime and can lead to consequences far worse than being grounded, including juvenile detention centers and even prison.

If stealing money from a parent, the youngster should be offered options for paying back the money, like doing extra chores around the house. It's important, however, that a parent not bait the youngster by leaving out money in the hopes of catching the youngster in the act. That could damage the sense of trust between a parent and youngster.

#### If a Youngster Keeps Stealing—

If your youngster has stolen on more than one occasion, consider getting professional help. Repeat offenses may indicate a bigger problem.

One third of juveniles who've been caught shoplifting say it's difficult for them to quit. So, it's important to help children and adolescents understand why stealing is wrong and that they may face serious consequences if they continue to steal.

Others who may be able to talk to you and/or your youngster about the problem and help you address it include a:

- support group, such as the National Association for Shoplifting Prevention (NASP) or Kleptomaniacs and Shoplifters Anonymous (CASA), which may be able to provide information or help (look in your phone book for groups in your area)
- school counselor (especially if your youngster is stealing from the school)
- minister, priest, or rabbi
- family therapist or counselor
- family doctor (who may be able to refer you to a family therapist or counselor)

Although most ordinary acts of theft or shoplifting are deliberate, some people who steal may have kleptomania. With this rare compulsive disorder, which makes up a very small portion of all shoplifting cases, a person feels a sense of tension or anxiety before the theft, then feels relief or gratification when committing the theft. The person may feel guilt afterward and often discard the objects after stealing them, and also might have other compulsive disorders (such as an eating disorder or obsessive compulsive disorder, OCD).

Whatever the underlying cause, if stealing is becoming a habit with your youngster or teen, consider speaking with a doctor or therapist to get to the cause of the behavior. It's also important to routinely monitor your youngster's behavior, keep him or her away from situations in which stealing is a temptation, and establish reasonable consequences for stealing if it does occur.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:55AM (-07:00)

## What to do when your child is "hanging" with the wrong crowd...

Thursday, August 13, 2009



There seems to be nothing more difficult for moms & dads to tolerate than seeing their children bond with a negative peer group. Kids who don't value school are often anti-moms & dads and pro-alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and casual sex and thrive on irreverent and often obnoxious music. Your children will probably proclaim that they are good and loyal friends or that they're much nicer and less shallow than the "preppies" and "jocks." These negative peers may indeed be kinder to your children than some other children you'd prefer for them to befriend. Your children may become secretive, say that you're controlling, and protest that you have no right to say with whom they can be friends.

Many of the anti-school children I've worked with are lonely, attention seeking, and sometimes aggressive as elementary-age children. Moms & dads and teachers are anxious about their children' lack of friends, even when they do have a few. Moms & dads and teachers often put pressure on them to make friends, and the children connect having a large group of close friends with healthy adjustment. They feel that adults are disappointed in them when they don't have friends, and by middle school, they become so anxious about making friends that they're willing to do almost anything to be included in any group that validates them. They develop a deep resentment toward the bright, achieving, or athletic children who haven't accepted them, and they share that

resentment in order to build solidarity with another group. In some ways, they believe that "good children" are bad, because the "bad children" are loyal to each other, although they may appear tough or mean to outsiders.

When your children are a little lonely, it's important to label it as independence even though you realize it isn't easy for them. In that way, you avoid putting too much pressure on them to make friends and become popular. Use this time to help them learn skills and develop interests that will enable them to share activities with others. For example, learning to play chess will encourage them to play with other children, developing an interest in music or art will give them a passion to share with other positive young people who also enjoy those activities, or playing soccer or taking gymnastics classes will make them feel like part of a team. Once they have friends who share their interests, they will be less likely to feel pressured to unite with negative children.

Rebellious teens are often over-empowered by moms & dads who are divided. A mother who allies with her youngster against the dad, or a father who allies with a youngster against the mom, teaches a youngster that relationships become closer and more intimate when two people share a common enemy. Learning to feel close to a person only when there's a common enemy can become a very negative but intense habit, which transfers naturally to finding a peer group or even a boy- or girlfriend who is against school or moms & dads.

This alliance-against-an-enemy relationship with a parent becomes an even greater risk during or after a divorce. Mothers who have been rejected by their husbands can be especially vulnerable to sharing intimate details about the husband's behavior. Although at first it seems that children understand the situation and value the intimate sharing, this too-intimate practice almost always backfires. Divorce is no time to assume that children are mature enough to be your counselors or confidantes. Not only does this place children in an impossible dilemma, but it also teaches them to disrespect and rebel against their other parent, which will in turn cause the other parent to teach them disrespect for you. You're giving up your adult responsibility when your children may require it most.

Another important prevention scenario takes place after a move to a new community. I recommend having your youngster paired with other children initially when moving to a new school. The children with whom she's paired could make her feel more comfortable, as well as include her in a positive group. The selection of those new friends should be made carefully. You can probably do that most diplomatically if you share with the teacher or counselor your youngster's positive interests. If you do this, it's more likely that your youngster and those with whom she's paired will have activities or interests in common.

Sometimes teachers pair negative or needy children with new children in the hopes of helping them. Caution your youngster that finding good friends takes time. Be reassuring that there's no need to hurry it along, and that you're certain that eventually he'll find good friends. Seeking popularity encourages the quest for status and quantity of friends, which may or may not turn out to be a good thing, depending on the values of the popular peer group in the school.

There are several possibilities for helping your children ditch negative peer groups. Sometimes changing schools or teams can be effective. This has proven to be extremely powerful for some children who have been clients at my Family Achievement Clinic. Most

middle schools use a team approach with between two and four teams in a school. Talk to your youngster's school counselor about the possibility of changing to a different team to get him away from negative peers. This may help your youngster make new friends, particularly if he has at least one positive friend in a new team. Changing schools or teams works most effectively when negative relationships are just beginning, before your youngster is overly engaged with the group. It also works best if the negative group doesn't live in your neighborhood.

Sending a clear message to your youngster that you wish he not befriend a particular individual or group may make a difference for middle schoolers. You'll need to justify the prohibition by explaining that the other children's behavior is unacceptable, and you'll permit them to be friends outside of school only if you see a change in the other children. When both moms & dads agree on that philosophy, your youngster will likely accept it. When both moms & dads don't agree, don't waste your time prohibiting the friendship. This is an important communication that both moms & dads should talk through carefully.

The most positive technique for removing children from a negative peer group is to get them involved in positive peer experiences, such as fun enrichment programs, special-interest groups, drama, music, sports, Scouts, religious groups, summer programs, camps, or youth travel programs. They may not want to join without their friends, so introducing them to someone who's already part of a group may encourage them. A teacher or group leader may help to facilitate new friendships.

Encourage your youngster to enter contests or activities in which he has a chance of winning or receiving an important part. Don't hesitate to talk to a coach or teacher privately about your efforts to reverse your youngster's negativism. Winning children are often excluded from peer groups that are negative about school. Winning a speech, music, art, or sports contest often gives status to children and causes them to appear more interesting to positive children. Sometimes a victory is enough to separate a tween from a negative peer group.

A family trip is also an option for distracting your wayward youngster from negativity. Time away from peers in an entirely new environment can channel your youngster's independence. One-on-one trips with a parent may be effective in reducing tension and enhancing family closeness. A trip with only one parent and one tween may be more productive than if the whole family is present, because the tween will be freed from sibling rivalry issues.

If you introduce any of these courses of action to your children, don't expect them to like it. These options shouldn't be suggested as choices, or your children surely won't choose them. You can, however, permit or even encourage them to make choices among the options. For example, they can choose between a summer writing or music program, which will hopefully encourage new and positive interests and friendships.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:38AM (-07:00)

## What do I do with a 16 year old runaway...

Saturday, August 15, 2009

What do I do with a 16 year old runaway/illegal consumption.....she was in court for VOP for drinking on 6/19, served 30 days on PHD and is to follow up with counselor for tx. Her therapist referred her for psych eval, she was recently put on meds....she continues to smoke pot and lie about it. Failed a UDS for marijuana on 7/28. Parents are getting divorced and have lived in separate houses for awhile, were trying to work it out until mom caught dad with another woman, so dad followed mom home and beat her up....the girl is an emotional wreck every time I see her.

.....

She is likely self medicating her anxiety and depression with the pot, which is not ok by any means, but removing her from home to provide a consequence will just reinforce her fear that she is losing control of everything. Ask her therapist about an IOP (if it doesn't interfere with school). If that can't work, maybe she's a good candidate for the evening reporting program we have here at MCYC.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:06AM (-07:00)

## Is there still hope for her?

Saturday, August 15, 2009

Good Morning Mark

My 14 year old daughter left the house without my knowledge, and the police brought her home at midnight. She had been out riding around with a 19 yr old boy and several of her friends. The boy was one of the girl's cousin. The car matched the description of one the police were looking for. They took all the girls home and talked to all of them.

She knows the house rule about leaving the house, and broke it anyway. I took away her phone, and then returned it the next day with only family in her contacts and all others are locked out from her contact so that she can't call or text msg them.

My boyfriend broke it off with me after I told him about this, and my brother in law said that she was going to end up in jail. My question is: We have just started the out of control teen a few months ago, is there still hope for her? Everyone expects immediate results, except for me. I can see the changes, but we still have miles to go.

T.

.....

Hi T.,

Re: "...is there still hope for her?"

Yes. Of course. I think things are going well actually. The process of change is PAINFULLY slow sometimes -- but as long as there is slow but steady improvement, then thank God for it.

Sorry your b-friend lost hope early,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:20AM (-07:00)

## Stepfather and stepson ignore each other...

Saturday, August 15, 2009

Hi Mark

I have recently joined your online parenting support to help my 14 yo son D\_\_.

At the weekend he had a fight with his stepfather - caused by D\_\_'s attitude towards me, and now his stepfather, my husband wants nothing to do with him. I don't know how to get him to watch your videos or take any interest in D\_\_'s future. This is tearing me apart, they ignore each other or scowl and swear and I love and hate them both for what they are doing. I understand my husband, he has tried so hard to help D\_\_ and he is just nasty to everyone. C\_\_ has been with D\_\_ since he was 2 years old. I don't know what to do. Can I do it on my own? Will the strategies still work?

Please help me... I want to get away from them both. I want to cry all the time (I don't do it but I want to), I totally lose thought when I'm driving and don't know where I am and it frightens me. I am terrified every time they are in the same room together, I don't know what might set them off. D\_\_ is 6 ft 2" with a bad temper and terrible attitude. C\_\_ now refuses to be left alone with D\_\_ as he may lie about him and get C\_\_ into trouble with the authorities. This puts the pressure of D\_\_ totally on me.

I have watched your week one and part of week two videos and read all the pages and I know that we/I have done this to D\_\_ and I want to undo it.

Please help me,

J.

.....

Hi J.,

Re: Can I do it on my own?

YES

Re: ...will the strategies still work?

YES

One of the hardest things for a step-father is to figure out his role in the household. Many a stepfather makes the error of trying to come into the household acting like a biological parent. This is a big mistake. A stepfather who tries to assume too much disciplinary authority will create resentment in the kids and become very frustrated over time.

Your husband has a right to be treated with civility, and to expect that the household will be somewhat organized, but you are the kid's mother. It is your role to do the disciplining, and his role to support you and your decisions. It is critical to talk together to decide how you want to handle the worst situations and the things that the youngsters do that are the hardest for him to tolerate. However, unlike many biological dads, your husband should not be the 'enforcer.' You two need to come to some agreements so that you can present a united front to the kids. If the youngsters see him as the 'bad guy' and you as the 'protector' this is likely to hurt your marriage by putting you on separate 'teams'.

It also sounds like your husband may not have age appropriate expectations for your kids. It will be very important for the success of your family that you get some help dealing with this issue. Yelling, threatening or intimidating kids will lead to avoidance, fear and anger. I am sure your husband is trying to establish his authority, and that is not inappropriate in itself, but parenting through intimidation will lead to a very unhappy household, particularly when these youngsters enter adolescence and start yelling back!

I would strongly encourage you to get some help from a psychologist or counselor. You and your husband should meet with the clinician as a couple to help you both get on the same page about how you would like your household to be (I would not involve the youngsters in the therapy for some time - if at all). Your husband will do a lot for your marriage by learning to parent through positive means (which are more effective than punishment or intimidation). It will probably also help your husband to hear from someone besides you regarding what he can and cannot expect from kids this age.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:38AM (-07:00)

## How do I know if my son has an emotional disability?

Monday, August 17, 2009

How do I know if my son has an emotional disability?

Here's a check list of sorts...

- Ask your son if something has happened to him. Children sometimes act out in an attempt to draw attention to a problem they are having and are afraid of discussing.
- Ask your son's teacher if problems have occurred in the classroom and what things you can do to help your son at home.
- Beware of changes in environment or life events that may alter your son's behavior. Sometimes moving to a new town or school can cause a son to act out aggressively or

overly emotionally in an attempt to adjust to the change.

- Have your son professionally tested if you think your son has an emotional disability or if behavioral problems are creating academic, social or other problems for your son.
- Look for emotional cues. Does your son pretend to be physically ill when confronted with a school event or a social situation? Does your son have excessive fear or anxiety associated with certain activities? Does your son cry excessively over seemingly little things?
- Look for patterns of aggressive behavior lasting six months or longer. Does your son consistently bully others or use aggressive force with other children or animals? Does your son initiate fights?
- Set rules. Look for major infractions of rules such as truancy or running away with older children. With younger children, look for consistently breaking rules, aggression toward siblings, stealing and lying.
- Talk openly with your son about the behavior that concerns you. Explain that you are concerned and want to make changes. Be specific and nonjudgmental.
- Watch your son in social peer situations. Is your son withdrawn or rejected by other children? Does your son dominate play, causing other children to not want to play?
- Watch your son when playing independently. Does your son act violently toward toys and inanimate objects? Is your son self-destructive? Does your son seem depressed or uninterested in activity? Does your son cry or become frustrated easily?

The above items will give you some indication as to whether or not he has an emotional disability.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:45AM (-07:00)

## Son Won't Poop In Toilet

Wednesday, August 19, 2009



I need information on how to potty training my son. He will soon be five years old. 99% of the time he will use the toilet to urinate. But he will not use the toilet to have a bowel movement. He said he doesn't want to. I have started taking his toys away from him and trying not to spank him. I am raising my son all by myself. His father hasn't been in his life since he was a baby. My son father wasn't potty trained until he was four and he was very strong will also. I do not have enough emotion support and I have not been very social.

These issues could be major factors that have lead to his potty training problems. Please send me any advice you have on this situation.

.....

Your child obviously has bowel control and is very close to being completely potty trained. However, he is uncomfortable sitting on the potty and going number 2, which probably relates to constipation. Sometime in the past when he was potty training, he took a hard poop in the toilet or potty – but he thinks the “hard poop” is related to sitting on the potty and not his diet at the time. His diaper brought him comfort and allowed him to stand in a private place and bear-down when he was ready to poop.



Here's a 10-step plan:

1. Talk to your child about pooping in the potty but NOT when he needs to go poop. Ask him why he doesn't like to poop in the potty. Tell him that everybody poops in the potty ...mommy, daddy, etc. Explain what constipation is and why it happens.
2. Tell your child that he cannot use diapers – so he needs to learn to poop in the potty. Keep conversation light and remind him your there to help him. Don't create urgency and don't create pressure.
3. Pay attention to what you are feeding him and give him lots of stool-softening foods, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, fiber-rich fruit and vegetables, and plenty of water to wash it all down. Limit food-binders that make the poop hard (e.g., too much apple, too much chocolate, etc.).
4. When he is on the potty or toilet, ensure there is plenty of support for his feet and buttocks, because sitting properly on the potty supports the muscles in his abdomen to help him with pushing. He needs a good fitting potty where he can plant his feet firmly on the floor. If he is using the toilet, get a potty seat insert so that he feels safe and is stable – it will prevent him from falling in the bowl. And don't forget to put a stool under his feet for support.
5. Get your child to lean forward as much as possible while sitting on the potty. This will help to open up and relax the pelvic floor muscles which must occur every time you pass a bowel movement.
6. It could also be that your son has gotten into the habit of a bad routine. So when he needs to poop, he goes in his underpants, or you give him a diaper, and the circle keeps going around. You need to wean him away from the bad habit of pooping his underpants or soiling his diaper by establishing a new bowel movement routine that involves the potty or toilet. Rather than yelling at him for pooping in his underpants or giving in to his request for a diaper, invite him to use the potty in a positive way at that targets the time of day he usually goes number 2 – then give positive reinforcement by praising him for trying or when he has success.
7. If your child is afraid of the toilet, take him into the toilet... put the seat cover down... put him on your lap ...and read a book. Flush intermittently to get him used to the noise
8. If you have not had him to a medical doctor, do so to rule out a physical reason. Often soiling is due to emotional reasons. You do not want this to develop into a power struggle with your son. If it turns into a power struggle with him, you will really have problems on your hands.
9. If you have tried many things to remedy the problem – but nothing works, you may want to seek out the help of a child psychologist. Your insurance plan can help you find one – or contact your local university psychology department.
10. This problem requires a great deal of love and gentleness on your part. I would not require him to clean himself up. Don't punish this "behavior." He is doing the best he can, and anything that involves shame or force will only back fire.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:11AM (-07:00)

## The Effect of Rage on Families

Wednesday, August 19, 2009

Family ties are one of the strongest contributors to individual character development. Many of us spend years trying to understand, erase, or copy the influence of our family unit. When Rage is part of a family's tradition, it spreads itself much like a virus to future generations. The wider the spread, the more difficult the Rage is to contain.

The effect of Rage in families is usually apparent in the way that members relate with one another. Our earliest experiences communicating and relating to others occurs within the family. Patterns of Rage in relationships are then taken and recreated in later relationships outside the family. Thankfully, a committed, well-designed treatment plan can repair the damage of having been raised in an hostile family system.

Rage in Relationships—

Rage is one of the most common negative patterns in relationships. Couples sometimes report that it is their Rage that makes the relationship feel alive. Rage takes root in insecure relationships where open communication is absent and the emotion of love is buried beneath years of Resentment. There is typically hopelessness in the present and doubt about the future in these relationships. The good news is that individuals committed to improving their relationships through the hard work of therapy are generally rewarded with a renewed sense of hope. Here are some tips on how to limit Rage producing interactions in your relationships:

1. Always consider individual or family therapy in instances where your Rage feels out of control and/or mysterious.
2. Ask yourself if you have legitimate assumptions about the intentions of others.
3. Before feeling attacked or hurt, make an attempt to give others the benefit of the doubt, especially if you have nothing to lose by doing so.
4. Explore your participation in relationships that repeatedly bring out the worst in you.
5. Keep the lines of communication open. When you feel Resentment building, see if you can journal your feelings and then share your thoughts with a loved one.
6. When you have Rage toward another person, start with an internal check of your own emotional state. Ask yourself why you feel the way you do.

How Do I Know If My Family or Loved One Has a Rage Problem?

Hostile individuals are, in most instances, very aware of their problems in controlling Rage. Unfortunately, too many come to accept their Rage as an unchangeable part of who they are and feel hopeless to change. If you feel that you or a loved one may have an Rage disorder, look for several of the following symptoms happening in your life on a regular basis:

1. Becoming more hostile than is appropriate in regard to mild frustration or irritation.
2. Family and/or friends approach you with the concern that you need help managing

your Rage.

3. Having chronic physical symptoms such as high blood pressure, gastrointestinal, difficulties, or anxiety.
4. Having feelings of guilt or regret over something that you have said or done in a fit of Rage.
5. Repeated social conflict as a result of Rage outbursts (law suits, fights, property damage, school suspensions, etc.).

#### Where to Get Help for My Rage—

Fortunately, the mental health profession has been responsive to individuals seeking treatment for help with Rage. Referrals to treatment programs and services are often available and mandated for those individuals suffering moderate to severe social conflict. Many chronically hostile individuals feel shame and guilt about their Rage. There may be times when a friend or loved one may need to request help or plan an intervention for the hostile individual. In such instances, it is critical to take advantage of mental health professionals with a background in Rage management training.

#### What Kind of Help Will I Get for My Rage?

An effective Rage management plan can include individual or family therapies, which are some of the more common ways people attempt to deal with chronic Rage.

#### Individual Therapy—

Individual therapy, which explores the root of hostile feelings and behavior, is traditionally a safer, more secure option to working with the entire hostile family at once. Treatment with individuals helps facilitate a thorough focus on the most important emotions beneath the individual's Rage.

#### Family Therapy—

Family therapy is a powerful way of repairing the damaging effect of long-term Rage interactions. Over time, chronic Rage drives a wedge between family members, resulting in the members becoming disconnected from one another, or overly involved with one another in an unhealthy manner. Therapy would consider each member's role in the Rage interactions, versus assuming any single member is responsible for the family's Rage.

#### How Marriage and Family Therapy Helps Control Rage—

More often than not, chronic Rage has a lengthy, definable history. Marriage and family therapists are trained experts in identifying Rage patterns that pass from one generation to the next. Identifying these patterns helps to explore individuals' learned perceptions about the appropriateness of Rage expression and suppression. Encouraging a parent to share how emotions were expressed in his or her immediate family allows other family members to understand the family's inherited concepts about Rage.

#### Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:29AM (-07:00)

# My child has just been diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder...

Thursday, August 20, 2009

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is a psychiatric disorder that is characterized by two different sets of problems. These are aggressiveness and a tendency to purposefully bother and irritate others. It is often the reason that people seek treatment. When OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is present with ADHD, depression, tourette's, anxiety disorders, or other neuropsychiatric disorders, it makes life with that child far more difficult. For Example, ADHD plus OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is much worse than ADHD alone, often enough to make people seek treatment. The criteria for OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER are:

A pattern of negativistic, hostile, and defiant behavior lasting at least six months during which four or more of the following are present:

- is often angry and resentful
- is often spiteful and vindictive
- is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
- often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
- often argues with adults
- often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
- often deliberately annoys people
- often loses temper

The disturbance in behavior causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.

All of the criteria above include the word "often". But what exactly does that mean? Recent studies have shown that these behaviors occur to a varying degree in all kids. These researchers have found that the "often" is best solved by the following criteria:

Has occurred at all during the last three months—

- blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
- is spiteful and vindictive

Occurs at least twice a week—

- actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
- argues with adults
- is touchy or easily annoyed by others
- loses temper

Occurs at least four times per week—

- deliberately annoys people
- is angry and resentful

If you are not careful, this disorder will destroy you long before it ruins your child. The

outcome can be dismal if you do not seek some outside assistance from a professional.

==> Here's more info...

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:10AM (-07:00)

## Could you tell me what causes Oppositional Defiant Disorder? Is it ...

Saturday, August 22, 2009

No one knows for certain. The usual pattern is for problems to begin between ages 1-3. If you think about it, a lot of these behaviors are normal at age 2, but in ODD, they never go away. ODD does run in families. If a father is alcoholic and has been in trouble with the law, his child is almost three times as likely to have ODD (18% of kids will have ODD if the parent is alcoholic and has been in trouble with the law).

ODD is diagnosed in the same way as many other psychiatric disorders in kids. You need to examine the child, talk with him, talk to the parents, and review the medical history. Sometimes other medical tests are necessary to make sure it is not something else. You always need to check kids out for other psychiatric disorders, because it is common for kids with ODD to have other problems, too.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:16AM (-07:00)

## Children & Stealing

Saturday, August 29, 2009

Hi Mark

It's been a long time since we were last in touch.

I'm afraid the relationship between my son and us has completely broken down. We've left London and now live in Leeds, my son K\_\_ didn't want to come with us, so he stayed with his grandmother who has served to cause further damage between us.

We've recently started living with one of my husband's two sons, J\_\_.

I was really pleased to be living with him, but he has brought an entirely different problem to us: He steals. From his family. So far he has stolen from four of his cousins and from my mother. He was living with my sister-in-law for a while before my husband and I were able to move to Leeds at the beginning of June. Within three weeks of living with her he had stolen over £100 - he is only twelve years old. He lies and doesn't care about the pain and upset he causes, he will just deny that he has stolen anything for months on end. When he finally admitted to stealing from his aunt's house, he went around there with the intention of apologising for as little as he could get away with. In the end, because I told him I would only forgive him when he made a full apology for stealing from all of the people he had really stolen from, he finally admitted to it and told what he had done with the money, how he had spent it, etc.

He can no longer stay at his aunt's house.

So, he is staying with us at my mother's house until our home is renovated (hence him not living with us in the first place). The only thing is, he stole from my mother the very next day after making his "full apology" at his aunt's house. He has not apologised for stealing from my mother, nor has he admitted to it or given the money back.

Today, it has come to light that he has stolen from his six year old cousin (on my side of the family) whilst she was staying here at my mother's with her parents and other siblings.

I'm really annoyed with him and by him. He is SO polite all of the time and yet he could steal without the least bit of conscience at all. He told me once that when he steals it's nothing personal, he doesn't dislike the person he steals from. He said that he didn't see the point of apologising or giving the money back because it's like when you squeeze out too much toothpaste from the tube; you can't put it back in so what's the point of trying?

I really don't know what to do about him. I can already feel resentment building because I don't like the idea of bringing a thief into my mother's home so that he can take what he pleases. He has created financial impacts on us because my husband has taken time off work to deal with his misbehaviour (he only gets paid when he works) and we have to pay the money back he keeps stealing because he doesn't get much pocket money.

I want his stealing to stop. I know what I would do if he were my son, but he isn't so it's very difficult for me.

Do you have any advice?

With thanks in advance,

N.

.....

Regardless of why kids steal, the stealing itself must be handled by following the steps below. Knowing what lies behind the stealing helps you recognize patterns that may be occurring in other parts of your youngster's life. It also assists you in understanding needs that aren't being met in his life that you can teach him to meet in socially appropriate and effective ways. These are the primary reasons kids and adolescents steal:

- It is a way of seeking attention.
- It is done for revenge or to hurt somebody.
- It may support a drug habit.
- Older kids may like the risk.
- They may not have learned to respect the rights of others.
- They think taking something is the only way they can get what they want.
- They think they can get away with it.

#### WHAT TO DO—

When kids take items like money, toys, pens, pencils and erasers, they think that is the only way to easily get these items. Brainstorming ideas with your youngster about how to

appropriately get what he wants lets him know you want him to meet his needs successfully. If he receives an allowance, offer suggestions about how he might earn extra money to buy the school supplies or toys he wants. Assist him in planning a savings budget for wanted items. Model for him how to ask for the extra money he desires. For example, you might say, "It is not okay for you to take money from my purse (your sister's room, etc.). If you want or need money, come to me and say, 'I need extra money for pencils', or 'I want money for candy.' Sometimes we might work out a loan. Sometimes I will say that I can't give you the money. When that happens, we'll see if we can create a plan together."

If stealing is done to seek attention, the youngster usually does it in such a way that he is easily caught. Handle the stealing straightforwardly but give no extra attention to it. Do not discuss it past the time of returning or replacing the taken item. Look for positive behaviors the youngster exhibits and begin acknowledging them regularly. When kids feel acknowledged for appropriate behavior, they seek less negative attention.

Sometimes kids steal to hurt their victim or to get revenge. This can be a way siblings inappropriately handle hurt feelings with each other. Their motive is, "I'm going to make you feel as bad as you make me feel." If your youngster wants to hurt you because she feels picked on or misunderstood, she may take money from your purse or wallet. She may take something from your dresser drawer. What better way to arouse your hurt and concern?

Your own injured feelings can be a sign that this was your youngster's motive for stealing. Address your own feelings with her; then explore her hurt. You might say something like, "I feel sad and scared when you take money from me. I know you were angry this morning when I yelled at you for missing the bus. I said some unkind things. Taking my money won't solve our problem. I'm sorry I was mean. I know you weren't feeling well and didn't want to go to school." Let her know that she can tell you she is angry. She doesn't need to take your money. If you are wrong about the motive, your youngster will let you know in such a way that you can continue exploring through positive communication. Only attempt this kind of communication when you have time to complete the process.

Kids may steal because they think they can get away with it. This is particularly true when parents are inconsistent in following through with consequences for not complying with household standards or when deviant behavior has been inconsistently addressed in the past. When we are inconsistent in our effective parenting, kids know that they have a strong chance of getting away with inappropriate behavior. In assisting our kids toward appropriate behavior, we must be willing to take the necessary time and energy for following through on set consequences for family standards.

The best way we can assist a youngster in learning to respect the rights of others is to model that respect ourselves. If we take sugar packets from restaurants, don't tell a cashier if we have received too much change or are dishonest in business transactions, we are letting our kids know this behavior is acceptable. If we take items from our kid's rooms or backpacks without asking, we are not respecting their rights. Be a good model. Teach the respect you want your youngster to give to you and others through your own respect for the rights and property of others.

When older kids and adolescents who do not have a criminal history engage in stealing, it may be to experience the high risk factor at play. Like younger kids, the motive is to see if they can get away without being caught. The stakes are high. Shoplifting or taking

hubcaps or hood ornaments from cars are common choices. The sooner the adolescent needs to face the consequences of such behavior, the less likely he is to continue in it.

It is important to remember that straightforward and compassionate handling of the problem is called for. Verbally attacking the adolescent will not solve the problem, nor will consequences unrelated to the incident. If the police are involved, the consequences may not be in your hands. You may want to seek professional help if your older youngster or adolescent steals.

Kids and adolescents who are involved with drugs steal to support the drug habit. If you have any reason to believe that this is the motive for stealing, seek professional help immediately. As parents, we don't want to believe our kids use illegal drugs. Closing our eyes to the possibility is not the answer. Neither is demanding answers from our offspring or indiscriminately punishing them. Kids and adolescents who use drugs are hurting. They need guidance beyond what most parents are able to provide. Professional intervention offers the best opportunity for positive outcomes.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:51AM (-07:00)

## What are the statistics on ODD?

Monday, August 31, 2009

ODD is the most common psychiatric problem in kids. Over 5% of kids have this. In younger kids it is more common in males than females, but as they grow older, the rate is the same in males and females.

It is exceptionally rare for a psychiatrist to see a youngster with only ODD. Usually the youngster has some other neuropsychiatric disorder along with ODD. The tendency for disorders in medicine to occur together is called co-morbidity. Understanding co-morbidity in pediatric psychiatry is one of the most important areas of research at this moment.

If a youngster comes to a clinic and is diagnosed with ADHD, about 30-40% of the time the youngster will also have ODD.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:50AM (-07:00)

## Examples of Oppositional Defiant Behavior

Wednesday, September 09, 2009

Here are three examples of how Oppositional Defiant Disorder [ODD] looks across ages. These examples stress some of the common features of ODD:

Pre-school Shelby—

Shelby is now 4 years old. Her parents were very excited when she turned four that perhaps that would mean that the terrible twos were finally over. They were not. Her parents are very grateful that the Grandparents are nearby. The grandparents are



grateful that Shelby's aunts and uncles live nearby. Shelby's Aunt is grateful that this is her niece, not her daughter. Why? Shelby requires an incredible combination of strength, patience, and endurance.

Shelby begins her day by getting up early and making noise. Her father unfortunately has mentioned how much this bothers him. So she turns on the TV, or if that has been mysteriously disconnected, bangs things around until her parents come out. Breakfast is the first battleground of the day. Shelby does not like what is being served once it is placed in front of her. She seems to be able to sense how hurried her parents are. When they are very rushed, she is more stubborn and might refuse it altogether. It would be a safe bet that she would tell her Mom that the toast tastes like poop. This gets her the first "time out" of the day.

In the mornings she goes to pre-school or goes off with her grandmother or over to her aunts. Otherwise Shelby's mother is unable to do anything. Shelby cannot entertain herself for more than a few moments. She likes to spend her time purposefully annoying her mom, at least so it seems. Shelby will demand over and over that she wants something (e.g., play dough). She knows it must be made first. So her mom finally gives in and makes it. Shelby plays with it about one minute and says, "Let's do something". Her mother reminds her that they are doing something, the very thing that Shelby has been demanding for the last hour. "No, let's do something else."

So after Shelby's mother screamed so hard she was hoarse when her husband came home, Shelby gets to go out almost every morning. At preschool she is almost perfect, but will not ever do exactly what the teacher wants. Only once has she had a tantrum there. Shelby gets along with the other children as long as she can tell them what to do.

Her grandmother and Aunt all follow the same "time out" plan. This means she goes to a certain room until she calms down. The room is empty now at Shelby's grandmother. Shelby broke the toys, and they were removed. She banged the furniture around and it was removed. What sets Shelby off is not getting to do what Shelby wants. She screams, tells people she hates them, and swings pretty hard for a four old. After a half hour it is usually over, but not always. Shelby will usually tell her mom or Grandmother about these tantrums. The story is always twisted a little. For example, Shelby will tell her Grandmother that her mom locked her in her room because she was watching TV.

Her grandmother used to believe these stories, and Shelby could tell the whole story of how she was watching this show, and her mom just came in and dragged her to her room. Now it turns out that Grandma doesn't think much of TV anyways, and so this made a certain amount of sense to her. This led to more than one heated argument between the Grandma and her mom. Of course there was almost no truth to this at all. It took the tables being turned for the Grandma to really believe that her Granddaughter could set up an argument like this. Shelby came home and told her mom that Grandma let her eat four cookies and an ice cream cone for a treat and that she was very full. Shelby's mom doesn't think much of treats, and could see how this might happen and thought she would have to talk to her mom. Finally they both realized what Shelby was doing.

Most of the afternoon with Shelby is spent chasing her around trying to wear her out. It doesn't seem to work, but it is worth a try. When she is at her aunts, she tries to wreck her cousin's stuff. When is she good? When there are no other cousins around and she has the complete attention of her Aunt or Grandpa.

Shelby loves the bedtime battle. She also loves to go to the Mall. But she never gets to go there or hardly anywhere else. She acts up so badly that her family is very embarrassed. Her mother shops and visits only when Shelby goes to preschool. It is hard to know who is more excited about Shelby going to school next year, her mother or Shelby!

Elementary School Cody—

Cody is 10. Cody's day usually starts out with arguing about what he can and cannot bring to school. His mother and his teacher have now made out a written list of what these things are. Cody was bringing a calculator to school and telling his teacher that his mother said it was alright. At first his teacher wondered about this, but Cody seemed so believable. Then Cody brought a little (Cody's words) knife. That led to a real understanding between the teacher and Cody's mother.

Cody does not go to school on the bus. He gets teased and then retaliates immediately. Since it is impossible to supervise bus rides adequately, his parents and the school gave up and they drive him to school. It is still hard to get him there on time. As the time to leave approaches, he gets slower and slower. Now it is not quite as bad because for every minute he is late he loses a dime from his daily allowance. Once at school, he usually gets into a little pushing with the other kids in those few minutes between his mother's eyes and the teacher's. The class work does not go that badly now. Between the daily allowance which is geared to behavior and his medicine, he manages alright. This is good for everyone. At the beginning of the school year he would flip desks, swear at the teacher, tear up his work and refuse to do most things. Looking back, the reasons seem so trivial. He was not allowed to go to the bathroom, so he flipped his desk. He was told to stop tapping his pencil, so he swore at the teacher.

Recess is still the hardest time. Cody tells everyone that he has lots of friends, but if you watch what goes on in the lunch room or on the playground, it is hard to figure out who they are. Some kids avoid him, but most would give him a chance if he wasn't so bossy. The playground supervisor tries to get him involved in a field hockey game every day. He isn't bad at it, but he will not pass the ball, so no one really wants him on his team.

After school was the time that made his mom seriously considers foster care. The home work battle was horrible. He would refuse to do work for an hour, then complain, break pencils and irritate her. This dragged 30 minutes of work out to two hours. So, now she hires a tutor. He doesn't try all of this on the tutor, at least so far. With no home work, he is easier to take. But he still wants to do something with her every minute. Each day he asks her to help him with a model or play a game at about 4:30. Each day she tells him she cannot right now as she is making supper. Each day he screams out that she doesn't ever do anything with him, slams the door, and goes in the other room and usually turns the TV on very loud. She comes up, tells him to turn it down three times. He doesn't and is sent to his room. She calculated that she has made about 1500 suppers since he was five years old. Could it be that they have gone through this 1500 times? She decides this is not a good thought to follow through. After supper Cody's dad takes over and they play some games together and usually it goes fine for about an hour. Then it usually ended in screaming. So Cody's grandmother had the bright idea of inviting them over for desert at about 8:00 pm most nights. But what about days when there is no school? Cody's parents try very hard not to think about that.

## High School Terri—

Terri is 15. She is in ninth grade and from her marks you would say there is no big problem. She is passing everything, but her teachers always comment that she is capable of much more if she tried. If they gave marks for getting along with others, it would be a different story. Terri's best friend is currently doing a 6 month sentence for vandalism and shoplifting. Terri and Sylvie have been friends since fall, if you can call it that. Since Terri has almost no other friends, she will do anything to be Sylvie's friend. At least that is what her parents think. Terri thinks it is "cool" that Sylvie is at the Shelburne Youth Center. One sign of this friendship was that Terri almost always gave her lunch money to Sylvie. Why? Because Sylvie wanted it.

Terri thought that Sylvie was her friend, but everyone could see that Sylvie was just using her. What seemed saddest to Terri's parents is that Terri could not see this at all. But this was nothing new. She would make a friend, smother them with attention, and that would be the end of it. Or, the friend would not do exactly what Terri wanted and there would be a big fight, and it would be over. But mostly Terri complained that everyone bugged her. What seemed to save Terri was the nursing home. Somewhere along the way Terri got involved working there. To hear the staff there talk about her, you would never guess it was the same girl. Helpful, kind, thoughtful - they couldn't say enough good things about her. In fact her parents joked that maybe if they all moved to the nursing home, it would stop the fighting at home. They figured it out when another teenager volunteered to help one of the same afternoons as Terri. Unfortunately the "other" Terri came out. She was tattling, annoying, disrespectful and hard to get along with. Terri could get along with any one, as long as they weren't her age, a teacher, or a relative!

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:04PM (-07:00)

## Parent Abuse: Help for Parents of Violent Teens

Friday, September 11, 2009

Who would you call for help if your 15-year-old teenager becomes so out-of-control with violent outbursts that it leads him to going after his parent with a knife?

- Child Protective Services?
- Crisis Hot Lines?
- Doctors?
- Mental Health?
- Support Groups?
- The Police?
- Therapists?

Try and imagine feeling more like a prisoner than a parent with your teenager, because no one can handle your teenager not even school, so you home school.

Try spending thousands of dollars and going everywhere you can to find a cure, support, the newest medication, therapy, clinic, diet, only to realize your teenager is getting older, bigger and the violence is getting worst.

Try to imagine being scared of your own minor child (not teen) at times and there is NO

## WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP!

Try to imagine knowing if you try to escape, you can go to jail for “child abandonment” when you always want to be there for you teenager, however you can’t control them and need to be safe.

Try to imagine living this way daily, 24/7, give or take the severity of the violence from the minor. Try to imagine getting no help with the exception of 911 coming to defuse the situations.

Try to imagine praying for the day you wake with your teenager and it will be a loving, enjoyable and peaceful time with them and to not feel it is your fault when it is not.

Try to imagine, if you protect yourself and your teenager says it was abuse, you are investigated and could faced with charges, legal fees etc...

Try to imagine crying out for help from every authority letting them know, you and your family are in fear of your life while being in the presence of your teenager’s violent outbursts and you receive answers as these:

Police: Why am I doing your (the parents’) job?

Police: We can’t hand cuff and take into custody a 15-year-old child.

Crisis Hot Line: I understand you (the parent) feel your life is threatened by your teenager. We will send out a person to defuse the situation and place you on our mailing list and help you get involved in our support group.

Therapist: Call 911 and have the police come. Take your teenager to an ER to have him/her mentally evaluated. (Do you think this hasn’t been done already by the parents?)

Child Protective Services: What did you (the parents) do to create this situation?

Bottom line choices currently for many moms & dads with behavioral challenged teens are as follows:

- Possibly be involved in the legal system for child abandonment.
- Possibly be involved in the legal system trying to prove self protection or defending lies of child abuse accusations. The law sides with the minor and in most cases it should, but not in all.
- Possibly get hurt by the teenager or at worst case be killed.
- Possibly others getting hurt or worst case killed by the teenager.
- Possibly the teenager ends up hurt or worst case killed.

Perhaps the biggest obstacles to overcoming parent abuse are shame and blame. If your teen is violent (hitting, threatening, intimidating, name-calling, shoving, etc.) it’s tough to even think about getting help because acknowledging or naming the problem is painful.

To make matters worse, once parents that are suffering abuse find the courage to reach out they often do not find the help they need. Instead they find blame –“this is your fault because you are a bad parent.”

It is no wonder that parent abuse - an increasingly common problem – is not often talked about or adequately addressed.

If you are suffering abuse at the hands of your son or daughter, please know this:

- Present a united front – parents and other care-givers can work together on solutions for managing the problem of parent abuse whether it is directed at one or both parties.
- Rebuild an appropriate parent/child relationship – Help your teen understand what you expect. Consider the use of behavior contracts and family meetings. Remove privileges when necessary and spend time together doing things you both enjoy.
- Remind yourself that you do have inner strength and wisdom – you might not feel like it now faced with what seems like such an insurmountable problem, but you do. Marshaling that strength will help you do something; it might be learning more about parent abuse, interviewing therapists, finding a support group, etc. Just doing something can help you banish the feeling of powerlessness that often comes with parent abuse.
- There is something you can do – Rely on your inner strength and wisdom to guide you toward the best answer for your family. Consider all available resources. Some of these include: therapy or counseling, evaluation and medication, if appropriate; temporary respite, (BoysTown) drug/alcohol testing, if appropriate; mediation if your teen is willing to acknowledge that s/he is responsible for his/her own violence and the necessary steps to re-establish trust and safety in the home, anger management workshops, talking with trusted friends, etc.
- Think safety – Making a safety plan and calling the police, if necessary, does not mean you don't love your teenager. We all want to protect our teens but that protection cannot be traded against personal safety. Everyone has a right to physically and emotionally safe.
- Understand that turning the problem around will take time – As you experiment with different resources allow time to determine if what you are trying is really for you. If not, why not? For example, what kind of therapist do you think would work best with your family? Is it someone that values a collaborative approach? Someone that has more traditional positions on family roles and responsibilities? It is important to look for a good fit that feels comfortable.
- You are not alone – again, although the problem isn't often talked about, it does exist and it is increasingly common. Blaming is not the answer or even a useful response to the problem.

For many moms & dads, parent abuse feels like the outcome of a job not so well-done. Many parents feel like the abuse means they have failed themselves and their teens. When you start beating yourself up about the way you are being treated by your teen remember this:

Yes, you have had an influence on the person your teenager is today, but you are by no means the only influence. Your teens encounter many people and experiences that happen completely outside of you. Maybe you didn't have a part in causing what is happening now. But you do have some power to direct how your relationship will be going forward. Choose to use it.

A four-week program for parents who are experiencing abuse by their child can be downloaded here.

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:28AM (-07:00)

## Your column "ask the parent coach" was like reading about my family...

Saturday, September 12, 2009

My name is L\_\_\_ and I just want to thank you for your website that I stumbled upon while doing research on Reactive Attachment Disorder. Your column "ask the parent coach" was like reading about my family's life story the last 9 months. I have found a lot of websites on this disorder but yours really hit home for me.

We have a child that has been with us for 9 months that we were getting ready to adopt but have since decided that we do not have the capacity or time commitment to care for him. He was diagnosed with RAD by a school counselor recently and shows every sign of RAD except cruelty to animals. The more research I have done, the more I understand this disorder and the severity this boy has (he is 7). With 3 other young children, we have come to the conclusion that we can't commit to years of therapy without the rest of the family suffering in some way.

We know his family and he was taken away at the hospital and put into foster care for 3 months because his mother was a drug addict and he was tested positive for drugs in his system too. He has lived with his grandmother ever since but we feel, after reading all the websites that she too, has RAD. Her dysfunctional lifestyle is all Austin has even known. We thought we could help him with "tough love" and discipline but now we see that is not the case and all our efforts these last 9 months have made little to no impact.

She also misdiagnosed him with ADD and heavily medicated him to keep him in control. She then tried to take her own life because she couldn't deal with him anymore and that is where we stepped in. We wanted to help out a needy child and the opportunity presented itself. Our hope is that he does not get back into the hands of her or his mother again. We hope it is with someone who can dedicate the time to get him the care he needs and deserves. We will have to advise the court of our findings and hopefully they can help us find placement for Austin. Again, I would just like to thank you for opening our family's eyes on this disorder. I didn't take it seriously before but I do now.

Sincerely,

L\_\_\_

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:09PM (-07:00)

## Daughter won't stop smoking pot...

Sunday, September 13, 2009

Our 17 yr old daughter won't stop smoking pot – which she does daily to get through school. We have taken away privileges and have followed guidance in your ebook. Do we just ignore and ask her to leave once she's 18?

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This is a tricky subject and different for every family, but I truly believe that every teenager who wants to get marijuana, can.

Therefore, I always tell moms & dads, it is extremely difficult to try to shield a teenager today from being exposed to marijuana because it is so prominent. I believe parents, and what I do with many of my clients, need to spend their efforts trying to equip teenagers to make the right choices, so when they are exposed to it, they will choose not to get high.

No matter how strict a curfew you have, how often you drug test your teenagers, or whether they are an athlete, a scholar or a jock, your teenager will always find a way to use marijuana if they want to. The key is making sure they do not want to.

1. Ask Questions—Before you dive into trying to equip them with the power to ‘say no,’ try to gauge their level of involvement. Ask the tough questions. I am not saying to grill them before they go out, but showing them you are paying attention and are very involved is important and you can get an idea of how much or how little you know about their social life.

2. Build their Esteem—If you cannot prevent them from encountering marijuana, you can empower them to make the right choices. I do believe there is peer pressure to use pot. It is hard to say no when it feels like everyone is doing it and you know that if you get high, you have the chance to be friends with that jock, who would never talk to you otherwise. So encourage them to do esteem building activities, like running for student council, working out, or doing a hobby and help them be proud of who they are by engaging in their unique qualities.

3. Don’t Lecture—If you think we are doing marijuana, dabbling in marijuana, seeing it at parties or just want to talk to us about it, please talk, don’t lecture. I promise, we have heard all of the negative sides to smoking weed in health class. As soon as you start lecturing us, we stop listening. So, instead of approaching it like a health teacher, ask questions and let us come to our own conclusion, usually we know what is right or wrong, and if we feel like you are talking to us about it, not at us, at least we will come to you if we have questions or problems down the road.

4. Find Out Why—This is tricky, it is important to understand that, today, marijuana is not only for ‘the stoner’ teenagers. All different kinds of teenagers are doing it and it has become a sort of social unifier. A drama teenager and a jock might not hang out at a party, but if they get to the party and share a joint, they are friends. It is really important to understand this new social aspect and that it permeates all kinds of peer groups.

5. Listen to the Answers—Most times, when I hear moms & dads talk to their teenagers, parents do ask questions, but then answer the questions themselves. A question, and then silence will get you a long way. For some reason, even after we have already given a one-word answer, if we feel you are still waiting for more, we either get nervous (a sign we are hiding something) or splurge and let our mouths go. Also look at your teenager’s immediate facial response as soon as you ask a question. We are not as good at hiding our emotions and you might be able to gauge a lot by watching our reaction.

6. Look at Their Friends—I constantly hear the “well, it’s not my teenager because...”

response when I do speaking engagements on this topic. If you feel your child is either an angel or unreadable, look at their friends behavior. Have they gotten in trouble? Are they the ones who make the decisions where to go on the weekends? Friend's behavior means everything in the world of marijuana.

7. Offer Other Activities—When you talk to your parent friends, make sure everyone is on the same page with curfews and activities. If there is a semi-formal or prom coming up, offer to host a substance-free after party, host bbqs and movie nights. I think many teenagers get high simply because there is nothing better to do.

8. Offer Other Options—As horrible as it sounds, if your teenager wants to get high, they will find a way. Make sure that they know never to drive high. If you think they are smoking and you cannot do anything about it (sometimes it happens), then at least tell them to call you if they are ever in a situation and they will not get in trouble. Many, many, teenagers drive high or drunk and this worries me more than anything. If you do not think they would call you, then encourage an aunt, uncle, priest, rabbi, teacher, friend to be their secondary support system if they ever need to be bailed out or get a ride home.

9. Talk to Your Friends and Other Parents—Get informed about the marijuana culture in general and in your specific community. I post frequently on this topic and what teenagers are doing right now, so you can stay a step ahead. I highly recommend getting together with parent friends and talking about what your teenagers are doing and sharing notes about what they think is going on.

10. Give Other Reasons Not to Use Pot—I constantly talk to teens about smoking and always give them non-health class reasons not to use pot which, I believe, appeal more to their interests. I always stress to girls the aging effects of smoking. I spoke to a group of 16 year-olds about 'anti-partying' and gave them my reasons not to use pot (they were shocked, because they were so atypical):

- At a prestigious internship interview, a friend got offered the job and when they asked for a drug test, he knew couldn't pass it and they took back the offer.
- Gives you lip wrinkles.
- Lowers your sperm count.
- Make allergies worse.
- Makes you taste bad when you kiss.
- The pot makes your teeth yellow.
- You never know who is going to take an incriminating picture and post it somewhere, or use it against you later.

11. Give Them Excuses—Ok, so maybe they have the self-esteem to say no, and maybe they agree with the reasons above to say no, but sometimes people will not let up with the "just take one hit!, Just try it!" So, think of excuses for them to use. Here are some that I have given and tell teens to use:

- I am on a diet, it gives me uncontrollable munchies and I am not giving up my summer goal for one hit.
- I hate the taste.
- I have dance class/practice/a run tomorrow and I can never perform as well.
- It makes me really sleepy, and I am no fun when all I want to do is sleep.
- It makes me sneeze.
- My parents are waiting for me when I get home, and they will smell it/notice it.



- My parents/job/school/coach drug test me.
- Offer to be the reason! My parents told me to clearly tell people that they were watching me like hawks and that I would get in big trouble if I used pot. This almost always works, because everyone understands strict parents. So tell them to use you as the reason...after all there is some truth to it!

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 03:24PM (-07:00)

## Your program is spot-on!

Thursday, September 24, 2009

Mark,

I just wanted to follow up to let you know that your program is spot-on! I am just starting Session 3 in your materials and using the suggestions in my household with my 14 year old twins. They are blown away with my lack of engagement with their verbal attacks, behaviors and disrespect. I'm following your advice and using my words and actions carefully, as well as being consistent, and they are totally confused as to what happened to me. I simply refuse to let them get me angry or engage in their misbehavior; then I talk to them about consequences of continued behavior. It took several days of me calmly repeating myself with these new rules, one of them is getting it right away while the other is a bit more resistant but is coming to realize that she can't push my buttons anymore.

Thank you so much for making this program so affordable and supportive for the parent!!! I think we will make it through the next four years in a much calmer household.

D.B.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:25AM (-07:00)

## It's been a year since our last argument...

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Hi Mark,

Just wanted to thank you for this web site, it pretty much saved my relationship with my 16 year old son. We went from arguing, fighting and a final physical confrontation to him giving me a hug and telling me he loves me every morning before he leaves for school. It's been a year since our last argument. You're my hero!

Lee Michaelis, DDS

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:36AM (-07:00)

# Should I tell him that I am not his biological father?

Sunday, October 04, 2009

Hello Mr. Hutten,

I have a question for you. I have a 14 year old step son who does not know that I am not his biological father. His mother and I have been separated for 9 years. I get him and his brother, who is my biological son, three times a week. I have had this visitation arrangement with their mother for the entire 9 years.

I met the boy when he was 8 months old, and he really has no idea I am not his biological father.

That said, the boy treats me with no respect, gets into trouble and generally makes the time I have with him and his brother a nightmare. I could go on, but I am sure you can imagine what I have been going through.

My question-- Should I tell him that I am not his biological father? I really want to tell him because I do not think he appreciates exactly how good I have been to him. I spend a lot of time being angry at him and I think if he knew the real situation he might have a little more gratitude.

Please let me know what your professional opinion is.

Thank you so much for your help and your program.

Sincerely,

B.

.....

Yes! You should definitely tell him, but out of a sense of keeping the relationship on an honest level – not out of a need to apply your own hidden agenda (e.g., to lay a guilt-trip on him for how he has been treating you). Also, break the news to him at a time when things are calm – not after a heated argument or during conflict.

For all intents and purposes, he is your son – and as such, you should use all the disciplinary strategies in the eBook exactly as they are outlined. Some stepparents try to deal with the daunting task of being stepdad by taking the approach of "I won't interfere with your life." Unfortunately, this approach says to the stepchild: "I don't care that much about what happens to you." Stepchildren may resist involvement, but they will benefit far more -- and form a better relationship -- with an involved stepparent who applies both nurturing and discipline.

Give your stepson the gift of limits. Children need limits for healthy development. If they don't learn in the home that there are limits on their behavior, they'll have a harder time functioning in the outside world. If they resist limits -- and they will -- it will be easier for you to deal with it if you remind yourself that children do the same thing with their

biological parents.

Use clear and explicit rules to establish limits. "You never told me that" may be a legitimate objection when you try to punish a child for breaking a limit. Limits should be clear, consistent, and invariably enforced. And there should be clearly understood consequences for following or disobeying them. Don't overwhelm your stepchildren with rules, but have enough of them to create a moral order in your home.

Let stepchildren participate in making the rules. Have regular family meetings. Use them for sharing positive experiences, openly airing grievances and concerns, and formulating rules. Children should not have the final say in establishing each rule. But they should know that they have been heard. It's a basic principle that people are much more likely to conform when they have participated in the decision-making process.

Encourage openness about feelings. "I hate you. You're not my father." It's tempting to reprove the child and forbid such language. But that teaches stepchildren to suppress their feelings. Instead, tell the child why this kind of statement hurts and how it makes you feel. Then explore with the child why he feels this way, reminding him that you still want to be his father. Be honest with your stepchildren about your own feelings, and encourage them to be honest about theirs.

Plan special times and experiences with your stepson. Shared experiences build intimacy. Spend time alone with him. Do something that the child considers special (e.g., going hunting or fishing).

Maintain your sense of humor. Humor helps keep matters in perspective. It helps relieve tension. It builds intimacy when you laugh with someone else. Sometimes you can use humor to resolve a problem with a stepchild. Humor won't cure all problems, but a lack of humor can kill the relationship.

Other than these items above, use the techniques outlined in the eBook.

Good luck,

Mark

My Out-of-Control Stepson

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:51AM (-07:00)

## Teenage daughter runs away from consequences...

Tuesday, October 06, 2009

Hi Mark,

We bought my out of control teen for our problem teen, H\_\_\_ aged 16 (with undiagnosed emotional problems) and have found the tools very helpful, however we are at a loss to know how to deal with her runaway episodes which she does when she receives a consequence.

She ran away late one night in bare feet and walked all the way to her dad's house 7 & 1/2 kms away, (he was convicted with 18 charges of violence against me) she hadn't seen him for 10 years...and it turned out to be a bad experience...then went and stayed at a friend's. As she told us she wasn't coming home but was planning to move out which she can legally do at the age of 16, which she is now. I just told her how her choice to move out would affect her...we wouldn't support her financially...she would have to arrange all that herself and stayed in constant contact with her.

We have contacted the police and they have said unless she is considered at risk (ie mental health issues which she does have) they do not have the power to go and bring her home.

I managed to persuade her through much carefully thinking and talking to come home and return to school which she wanted to drop out of. She did work experience during the holidays that I took her to and now school has started she became very wound up and yelled at and gave me mouth for half an hour when she was reminded of a job she was required to do.

She went to school Monday and never came home...I believe she has gone to a friends...and I don't know what to do....I replied to her text on someone else's phone but have not heard back from her.

By running away when she is given a consequence (this has gone on for 2 & 1/2 years) she avoids all responsibility and accountability and I renders useless any discipline program.

What can I do about this as our Australian laws as we have signed the convention on the rights of the child have taken away parental rights?

How can I approach this problem for her benefit?

very distressed mum,

J.

.....

Hi J,

We as parents want to model for our children HOW THE "REAL WORLD" OPERATES.

In the real world, one has to follow certain rules (e.g., obey the speed limit).

In the real world, when someone breaks the rules, there is a consequence (e.g., a speeding ticket).

In the real world, if someone refuses to accept the 1st consequence (e.g., not paying the ticket)...

...there is usually a much stiffer consequence to follow (e.g., lose of driving privileges).

Thus, you will do more harm than good by (a) pleading and begging her to come

home/return to school and (b) tip-toeing around her in fear of issuing any consequences that may result in her running off.

As long as you take ownership of her "running" and "avoiding" -- then she does not have to take on any responsibility (you are taking it all). As soon as she realizes that HER PROBLEM IS HER PROBLEM (i.e., where she lives and whether or not she goes to school is HER responsibility), then she will begin to make some better choices.

Tell her she is always welcome to come home, but there will be rules as well as consequences for violating the rules. Then say, "You decide where you want to live. Take all the time you need."

Mark

.....

Hi Mark,

Thank you so much for your sound advice. Here's how I implemented your advice...

I sent her an email explaining the consequences of her choice to run away (which were increasing in severity the longer she stayed away). They involved confiscating all her important stuff and selling it should she not return home, and giving the money to her sister who she owed money to.

I would call her 'safe house' (which we had no details of without lots of investigation) and inform them of what we were going to do, and that she was under my legal guardianship, I would call CATT and CAHMS, adolescent and mental health teams, I would report her as a missing person to the police.

I gave her a time limit when they would begin. If she wasn't home by 8pm I would begin to implement my plan. Then I told her what would happen if another day went by....I would put up missing person posters of her around all her favourite haunts asking people for information. And I would sell her horse and cancel his agistment, and warned of daily consequences increasing in severity.

She was on the phone to me quick smart to say she was coming home before 8 but she couldn't find money for a bus fare, then rang to say there weren't many buses, then she rang to ask if I could pick her up.

Your right. Reading her the riot act and telling her the consequences made it her problem not mine and she became very anxious to avoid them.

Thank you so much, she came home a very compliant and subdued and obedient kid.

very grateful

J.

# Help for Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Friday, October 23, 2009

"I hate you, you're such a bitch, I am too going to wear my red dress! You promised me yesterday, and if I can't wear it today, I'm not getting ready for school!" Molly had been arguing about the dress for the past forty-five minutes. It was 8:05, mom was running late, and the dress was filthy. That overwhelming exhausted feeling enveloped mom and, once again, she caved. "Go ahead and wear it," she screamed.

If your youngster has been diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), this scenario may sound much too familiar. According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth Ed.*, oppositional defiant disorder can cause clinical impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning, and is characterized by a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant, disobedient and hostile behavior toward authority figures which persists for a period of at least six months.

Since kids pass through many developmental stages as they mature, it is important to understand the differences between normal childhood attempts to defy authority and symptoms of full-blown oppositional defiant disorder. Nine year-old Molly appears driven to defeat adults, is relentless in her pursuit of proving adults to be wrong, stupid, or both, and her thoughts revolve around defeating anyone's attempt to exercise authority over her. She typically turns every interaction with adults into win/lose situations and is vigorously intent on winning.

Oppositional defiant kids share many of the following characteristics:

- The ODD youngster is socially exploitive and very quick to notice how others respond. He then uses these responses to his advantage in family or social environments, or both.
- These kids tolerate a great deal of negativity – in fact they seem to thrive on large amounts of conflict, anger and negativity from others, and are frequently the winners in escalating battles of negativity.
- They possess a strong need for control, and will do just about anything to gain power.
- They typically deny responsibility for their misbehavior and have little insight into how they impact others.

Besides oppositional defiant disorder, kids like Molly may also have another psychiatric disorder. OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is frequently a co-morbid condition with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. It can also be diagnosed along with Tourette Syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety and mood disorders, Asperger's, language-processing impairments, sensory integration deficits, or even nonverbal learning disabilities. What causes this troubling behavior? Some researchers believe that many of the symptoms of these disorders may share common neurobiological mechanisms. If your youngster is affected by one of these disorders, it is critical to keep in mind that OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER can create additional problems for you and your youngster.

Many authorities on parenting have indicated that oppositional behavior is more prevalent when structure in the home is out of balance – when there is either too much structure or not enough. In an overly structured environment the parenting is rigid and inflexible. These moms and dads "micromanage" and come down hard on their kids, controlling every aspect of their lives. This particular style of parenting only serves to create more

opposition and defiance. On the other hand, structure that is too loose can also cause difficulties. Kids can exhibit oppositional defiant behavior when moms and dads do not provide enough structure by setting appropriate boundaries, or establishing and following through with consequences for misbehavior. These moms and dads usually give in to all of their youngster's demands, either out of fear of the youngster, or in an effort to keep themselves in the youngster's good graces. In order to prevent or reduce oppositional defiant behavior parents should aim towards a firm and loving parenting style in which the structure is balanced. Moms and dads must take charge, and place themselves at the top of the family hierarchy. They must use their authority as parents and, at the same time, make the youngster feel protected, loved and soothed.

How well the parents get along, whether married or divorced, is another factor to consider in preventing oppositional behavior. When couples are unhappy or oppositional in themselves, they frequently disagree on parenting issues, significantly limiting their success in changing the behavior of their youngster. Molly is an expert at dividing her parent's authority, and will most certainly take advantage of exploiting rifts between her parents. Couples counseling may be in order to decrease the hostility and conflict between parents and set the stage for united, successful parenting.

Another factor to consider is how the family is affected by OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER. This can be one of the most stressful conditions a family faces and, when it is secondary to another neuropsychiatric disorder, that stress is compounded. Family counseling may be helpful to resolve family difficulties. The family therapist can provide a controlled environment which offers support and skills training to weary moms and dads.

Once marital and family issues are addressed, moms and dads can begin to train both themselves and their youngster. If Molly's mother continues to respond to her quarrelsome behavior as she always has, Molly will continue to tune her out, escalate the arguments, and push mom's buttons. Most adults engage in an argument with concern for the outcome. The adult's goal in an argument is to come to a resolution. In other words, what transpires as a result of the conflict is most important. As a parent, from your perspective, if you have determined the outcome of the argument, you are the one in control. For the oppositional youngster the process of creating an argument is more meaningful to her than the outcome of the conflict. These arguments over insignificant issues may seem pointless however, with such a strong need for control, it is your oppositional youngster's goal is to escalate the conflict until you are no longer the one in control. What is important to her is not the issue being argued over, as much as what is going to happen during the argument.

In order to control the process of the argument the oppositional defiant youngster attempts to determine the topic and direction of the conflict, and seems to instinctively know when you are feeling most vulnerable and your energy is low. She will bring up conflict-laden issues during these times, aiming towards pushing your buttons and diverting you from issues in which you are likely to be attempting to exert your authority over her. When your ODD youngster finally pushes your buttons, in her mind, she has gained control of you and your emotions. At this point she has now successfully taken over your position of authority. Furthermore, when you lose control of your emotions, your youngster's anxiety level rises along with her defensiveness. When her defenses increase she becomes more oppositional which is her main defense mechanism. As she becomes more oppositional, the situation escalates and we are caught in an endless cycle of conflict.

Strategies for avoiding conflict are essential to de-escalate the situation. It is wise to change the subject if your energy is low, or you suspect that the topic of discussion will result in an argument. Walking away from the conflict is another strategy to consider. If you cannot change the subject, or walk away it is important to keep in mind that the ODD youngster's goal is to push your buttons. Think about your endurance, how long can you endure really oppositional button pushing? When you get to the end of your rope, what are your options? It is critical not to take what your youngster says personally. As soon as you defend yourself, your youngster, by the rules governing arguments, has the right to defend himself against your attack. In turn, you get to defend yourself, and he has now pushed your buttons and gained power. You do not have to defend yourself or try to convince him you are right. Do not lower yourself to the level of your oppositional youngster.

There are two options available for preventing him from drawing you in. Tell him, in an unruffled rational manner, that he has two choices. If he wants to stay around, he can change the subject and stop complaining; or he can go somewhere else in the house to complain if he chooses. Should your youngster choose to escalate, it is time to use two powerful words which can cut through any argument. These words are "regardless" and "nevertheless". For example, "nevertheless, this is how it is going to be..." Using these words repetitively (like a broken record), in a calm unemotional manner will serve to de-escalate the situation without allowing your youngster to draw you into the power struggle.

Utilizing effective consequences for the oppositional youngster can be difficult since this presents one more opportunity for conflict in which you are likely to lose power. Discussing consequences while you are in the midst of their negative behavior will most likely result in more frustration for you. Therefore, it is critical to focus on consequences that do not require cooperation of the youngster. Rules and consequences must be clear, and in writing to provide clarity for both youngster and parent before the conflict occurs. Begin by removing reinforcers and allowing your youngster to earn the items back as a reward for acceptable behavior. Reinforcers include items such as television, stereos, CD's computers, video games, telephones, bicycles, skateboards, visiting friends, access to favorite clothing, favorite foods, etc.

Once you have successfully avoided having your buttons pushed and gained some control over your youngster's behavior, it is time to go on the offensive to soothe her, and help her get back to an even place. Oppositional kids do not like being soothed by their caretakers. This places them back into the role of being a youngster, and puts you back into the role as the parent. One of the driving forces behind OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER is that, for whatever reasons, a youngster is trying to grow up too quickly, and considers herself to be equal to her parents. The ODD youngster may feel less loved due to the amount of conflict going on, and it is difficult to simultaneously feel loved as a youngster and try to operate on an adult level. Your youngster may know intellectually that she is loved, but not feel loved. Moms and dads must be able to show love, and soothe and nurture their youngster. This is not always easy to accomplish, especially when previous negative behavior patterns have become ingrained.

Kids look to their moms and dads for a sense of security, belonging and identity. As our society becomes more complex, the need for our kids to develop a clear set of values is critical. Current research also has indicated that boys with ADHD and increased oppositional behavior are at greater risk for later antisocial behavior. With this in mind, the need for structure becomes particularly relevant in today's world. It is apparent that



kids affected by a variety of neuropsychiatric disorders are at greater risk for oppositional behavior. Since this behavior will create additional difficulties for them as they pass through the various developmental stages, it becomes even more important to use the authority vested in us as moms and dads to establish consistent limits and consequences, and to distinguish boundaries within the family. This will form a family unit characterized by established guidelines, affording kids a secure backdrop in which they can grow and thrive.

My Out-of-Control Child

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:06AM (-07:00)

## Out of Control Daughter

Friday, November 20, 2009

Good Morning Mark,

I have finished the 4 weeks and have used some of the suggestions. Everything "sounds" good but much harder to implement. Anyway, I have a couple of questions at this point.

Before we started the course, we had pretty much taken away "all" of my daughters "stuff" and "freedom". Over the last 4 weeks, we have been looking for reasons to give things back so we can get on track. However, things keep coming up: she gets caught not telling the truth, skipping class at school, being late at school and not turning in assignments.

I feel like I can't give her "stuff" and "freedom" back when things keep coming up - and I have lost any leverage with her at all for future offenses. Do you have a suggestion?

Secondly, as a parent, what is your opinion about reading our kids e-mail, etc.? We have found things out this way in the past. The problem with this is that if I find something, I usually end up trying to circumvent the situation - it is very hard to let her make the mistake when I know what she is going to do before she does it.

Thirdly, I have reason to believe that she is going to try smoking pot. If I find out that she does and we tell her that next time we will call the cops. I am worried about following through with that threat because I don't want her to have a record later in life. Do you know what kinds of repercussions are typically involved?

Thanks for your time,  
N.

.....

Hi N.,

Re: I feel like I can't give her "stuff" and "freedom" back when things keep coming up - and I have lost any leverage with her at all for future offenses. Do you have a suggestion?

This "piling up" as you call it is addressed in SESSION #2 [online version of the ebook] under the section The Art Of Saying 'No' ...look for Q & A - On Discipline [right side of

page].

Re: Secondly, as a parent, what is your opinion about reading our kids e-mail, etc.?

Safety should always come first. Parents need to do whatever they must in order to ensure this safety. If that means reading the teen's journal, then so be it. If that means looking through dresser drawers or looking at their internet history, so be it.

Parents often make the mistake of trying to be their teen's best friend. The problem with that is parents are not meant to be their teen's best friend. They are meant to be parents...guiding forces that set boundaries, give consequences, and help the teen get ready for adulthood. It isn't always a pretty job...but it is a very necessary job. To turn a blind eye can put a teen's very life in danger.

Does this mean that parents need to always be suspicious of their teen? Of course not. However, if parents see clues that something is amiss in the life of their teen who will not open up, it is probably time for the parents to do some detective work.

Re: I have reason to believe that she is going to try smoking pot. If I find out that she does and we tell her that next time we will call the cops. I am worried about following through with that threat because I don't want her to have a record later in life. Do you know what kind of repercussions are typically involved?

I don't have much to add other than the recommendation in session #4 [under "Read These Emails From Exasperated parents" - online version of the ebook]. To ignore that recommendation is to employ "half-measures". Also, a juvenile's record is expunged and thus, does not follow them into adulthood.

Mark

My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:47AM (-08:00)

## Would you have any tips on how to get an ODD child to take his medi...

Friday, November 20, 2009

Here's how to get difficult children to cooperate:

- Avoid physical struggles. If you start holding a youngster down to give him medicine, you may have to do it again and again. If you find you are physically forcing a youngster to take his medicine on a regular basis, this may be a sign that you should talk with your doctor, nurse or social worker for professional advice.
- Explain how medicine helps children get well. Young children don't always understand how medicine works. You could explain it by simply saying, "This medicine will help you feel better so you can go back to the playground." You could also mention what the medicine is accomplishing: "You didn't wake up at all last night. That's because the medicine took your pain away."

- Explain the consequences. If a youngster refuses to take medicine, explain that he is making a choice that has consequences. You could say, 'I see you're choosing to stay in the house and not go outside and play until you take this medicine.' If you're trying to get out the door you might say, 'I see you're choosing to have me give you the medicine, instead of taking it yourself.'
- Give medications at the same time and place. It helps to create a designated spot in your house for giving medicine and to create a routine. To stay on schedule, put a checklist on the refrigerator or your youngster's door. With every dose of medication, have your youngster make a check or put a sticker on the list.
- If your youngster still resists, give him an "out." Before you take away a privilege, try giving your youngster an "out" or suggest taking a short break. This allows him to save face and regroup, physically and emotionally. Perhaps you just take a moment and give your youngster a hug, or get a drink of water and briefly break the cycle. But make sure that a five-minute break is only five minutes long.
- Let another adult take over. For children who are truly resistant, parents might divide the responsibility of who gives the medicine. This gives one parent a necessary break and helps the youngster realize that both parents are capable of handling this.
- Make the medication taste better, if your doctor approves. Sometimes keeping liquid medications cold makes them more palatable. And if your doctor allows, you can also put medicine in juice or add flavorings to it. Ask your doctor and pharmacist if the medication will taste bad, and if it's safe to add a flavoring. You can also inquire if it's safe to mix a liquid medicine with juice or food. But check with your doctor or nurse practitioner to make sure, before you do. Orange juice is often used to conceal bad-tasting medicine.
- Offer choices whenever you can. Taking medicine is non-negotiable, but other things are. Even the simplest choices give the youngster a needed sense of control over the situation and over his body. Offer two simple choices, such as, "Do you want the medicine before you get dressed or after?" or, "Would you like apple, orange or grape juice with your medicine?"

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:01AM (-08:00)

## Should Teens Be Forced To Attend Church?

Monday, November 23, 2009

Hi,

I have been using the parenting strategies since July. Things were going well, and my son even earned the privilege of a driving permit in October, which would allow him to take his driving test to have a driver's license. If he had stayed on track, he would have had his driver's test scheduled in November. However, within 1 week of earning the driving permit, he began to become rebellious again, argumentative, and sloppy or forgetful about his chores. I asked him what was bothering him, but he refused to say; he only had insults for me.

In the beginning of November, my son said that it was not fair for us to make him attend church on Sundays. I reminded him that it was a house rule that was agreed to by him. He told me that he did not believe there was anything after a person dies. I did not argue with him. 2 days after that statement, my son was hospitalized for 8 days because of seizures. He had over 60 seizures in that time span. My son was upset with me because we prayed for him-the seizures stopped.

He is at home now and has refused to go to church today. I repeated the request for him to be ready by 9am. I waited 10 minutes, and issued a warning of the consequence. I took his game controller when he did not get up. He told me that he was taking a stand for his faith. He told me he was agnostic 2 weeks ago.

This looks like a power struggle to me. However, I don't believe my husband will back down and let this go once he finds out. My husband strongly believes that his household will serve the Lord (at the least attend church). I believe this also, but would prefer to avoid the power struggle first.

What strategy should I have used? Once again, I will probably be in the cross fire between my son and his step-father.

.....

I don't think you will get your son to "serve the Lord" by forcing him to go to church. Attending church can be one of the most satisfying and exciting activities for any family. However, it can also be one of the most frustrating and draining days for moms and dads who have a difficult time getting their teenager to go to church. If your family finds itself in the second category, please understand you are NOT alone.

If your son does not like going to church, begin by asking the simple question, "Why". When asking this question, you must then be willing to listen. Don't comment after every sentence or roll your eyes when a reason is given that seems ridiculous. Ask God to give you patience as you listen intently to his objections, frustrations, and concerns. After your son is finished, begin talking about the reasons he gave and find a way to begin to actively address his concerns.

For example, one of their reasons could be he doesn't feel a part of the group. Some suggestions you might give could be to allow him to bring a friend, or ask with a great amount of diplomacy if he is making an effort to meet other teenagers. You can also find an adult volunteer in the Student Ministry and ask what they have observed.

It's true. You do have every right to "force" your son to attend church, but talking, listening, and problem solving allows your son to no longer be the "problem" -- but to be a part of the solution instead.

Here are some tips on getting your teenager connected to the church family:

1. Find a place of service for YOU. One of the best things a parent can do is get involved in the ministry your teenager attends. NOTE: You don't have to be "cool" to work with students. You MUST have a heart for the Lord and a heart for people. The rest will come.

2. Find a place of service for your teenager. There are MANY places in the church that need volunteers. Allow your son to serve on Sunday morning. This will greatly increase the chance for your son to feel connected and "needed" on Sunday mornings.

3. Worship happens all week, not just at church. Make it a point to talk about God during the week, not just on Sundays. That shows your family that God is about every day of the week, not just on Sunday.

4. PRAY! Don't forget the power of prayer. God definitely wants your family to find a place to worship and connect with other Christians. This is a request He wants to answer. It might take time and a lot of work, BUT your labor will not be in vain!

PRAY THAT:

1. God will clearly reveal to your son the priorities He wants for him.
2. God would put people in your son's life to "connect" with at church and to influence them and encourage them to want to be involved in church.
3. You will model for your son what it means to be "connected" in the body of Christ.
4. Your son will be open to listening to God's voice in giving direction in their life.

Bottom line: I would tackle this problem purely from a spiritual standpoint. Withdraw from the power struggle. Let go and let God. Don't force him to go to church (otherwise he may equate "going to church" with "being punished"). And trust that God will WORK on your son's behave.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:37AM (-08:00)

## Daughter is Sexually Assaulted

Sunday, November 29, 2009

Hello Mark:

This is a strange experience. That is, sending a stranger, albeit we believe, a caring stranger such as you, an e-mail.

My wife and I have used your program with our now 14 year old daughter, but not as fully as we could or should have. Nevertheless, we thought we had used our 'poker faces', and given 'consequences' lectures effectively, and that a real change (with constant and exhausting monitoring) was taking place. We had a real setback a month or so ago, in terms of inappropriate Facebook activities, and had our daughter cancel her Facebook profile and account.

This was disappointing, but again we thought it was one of a series of setbacks that we thought would diminish in severity and with time.

We were thinking a level of real trust was slowly taking hold. We were wrong! Today is Saturday evening. Yesterday evening we found out that our daughter and her only real friend, (according to her), a 15 year old girlfriend whom she has been very close friends

with for the last 2 years, were sexually assaulted in August. The 15 year old girl told an older female friend of her mother's on Wednesday. The older female friend of the mother left a message with the mother, but the mother only replied to her telephone call yesterday.

The police were called yesterday, and a female police officer took private separate statements from the girls yesterday evening. According to the girls, they were scared about the consequences of their telling anyone what had happened. Apparently the girls had first met 3 older men (mid 20's?) on the beach. They called our daughter's girlfriend, who obviously had given them her number. A week or so later, the men called to arrange to meet the girls in the city. They picked them up, stopped at a liquor store, and went to the beach. The girls played on the beach and then drank the liquor that was provided to them by the men. The men then took them to a cabin away from the beach. 3 of the men raped our daughter's girlfriend, and 2 raped our daughter. The men then drove the girls back to the city.

We have been told that the major crime unit will be interviewing the girls this coming week, and speaking with us. Our daughter's girlfriend was reluctant to do so, but revealed that she had the men's telephone numbers and their supposed names. My daughter told me today that she and her girlfriend have concluded that it was not their fault that they put themselves in such a situation. At this point my wife and I have been supportive, and have tried to be careful not to condemn them. The interesting point is that the girls feel it is our fault, and the girlfriend's single mother's fault. That is, because of their previous activities, we have (we thought) been monitoring their activities more closely. They feel that if we had allowed them a freer rein to associate with their peer group friends, that they would not have gotten into a car with 3 older men and gone to the beach with them.

My wife and I are traumatized and confused. I started to look at your material again. Earlier last year, before we had your material, we went to family counselling to help our daughter, and realized it was a waste of time, money, emotional energy, and gave our daughter a chance to twist and tell tales. After I decided to look at your site again, I realized that I had not fully read all of the material. I know it seems easy to label someone, and to give a diagnosis, but the ODD and ADHD are uncannily accurate. My wife and I are basically teetotalers, and have not had trouble with the law.

We are in a quandary as to what to do next. We know that our daughter and her girlfriend will be given psychiatric assessments and counselling in the next coming weeks, along with an investigation as to the real identities of the rapists. Presumably a trial and court case will ensue if the rapists are caught. A few hours ago, my daughter, wife and I had another screaming match totally unrelated to the rape incident. Actually, our whole life with our daughter has been tense and stressful. It has been a combination of temper tantrums and screaming matches. The 'poker face' and 'consequences' suggestion helps but does not work all of the time. Our marriage has suffered greatly. Our daughter speaks rudely to me, but mostly to my wife, and has said many vicious and cruel things to her. Many times when my wife has cried about our daughter and our family situation, our daughter has sneered and derided her.

It seems that our daughter and her girlfriend feel relieved to tell their story about the rape, and now feel that they can go about their lives the way they used to. Today they are laughing and carrying on as though everything is normal. Our daughter told my wife last night that now she and her girlfriend will be more cautious. That was all.

What an e-mail I am sending to you, and what a surreal experience we have had since last night. My wife and I do not know what to do next. The real ramifications of the rapes will probably not manifest themselves until years later. We are concerned about this and know that this will have to be dealt with at a later time, but at present are more concerned about the here and now. We feel we have been loving and supporting with no condemnation, but know that the root of the problem with our daughter is still there.

We believe your program has a lot of merit, and know that each situation is different. My wife and I (even though I am told that there is always one more ounce of energy left in out reservoirs when we need it) are thoroughly exhausted mentally and physically. We also have an 18 year old son who has suffered along with us. My wife has stated that in order to cope with our daughter, she is going to give her notice to quit work at the end of this year. We know you are not God, but you do have a lot of experience in working with troubled teens. What would you suggest our best course of action to take is?

Sincerely,

A confused and traumatized father and mother on behalf of a confused and troubled teen...

.....  
Teenagers and young adults are the age groups at greatest risk for rape -- especially acquaintance rape. About 50% of rape victims are under 18 years of age when they are victimized. Youths 12-17 are two to three times more likely to be sexually assaulted than adults. Most teenagers who are raped or sexually assaulted are victimized by someone they know.

It can be hard to help a child who's keeping a secret from you. Preteens and teenagers often turn to their friends to discuss deeply personal issues — and, unfortunately, something as serious as rape is no exception.

Perhaps your daughter fears you will get angry, thinking she "brought it on" in some way; perhaps you don't openly discuss sexual issues and she would feel uncomfortable telling you.

Whatever the reason, reaching out to your daughter and keeping the lines of communication open is crucial to your relationship. Let your daughter know, often, that you're there to listen and want to know if anyone ever harms her.

Someone who's been raped might feel angered, frightened, numb, degraded, or confused. It's also normal to feel ashamed or embarrassed. Some people withdraw from friends and family. Others don't want to be alone. Some feel depressed, anxious, or nervous.

Sometimes the feelings surrounding rape may show up in physical ways, such as trouble sleeping or eating. It may be hard to concentrate in school or to participate in everyday activities. Experts often refer to these emotions — and their physical side effects — as rape trauma syndrome. The best way to work through them is with professional help.

If your daughter has confided in you that she is the victim of rape, it's important to seek medical care right away. A doctor will need to check for STDs and internal injuries. Even

if your daughter doesn't get examined right away, it doesn't mean that she can't get a checkup later. A person can still go to a doctor or local clinic to get checked out for STDs, pregnancy, or injuries any time after being raped. In some cases, doctors can even gather evidence several days after a rape has occurred.

Those who have been raped sometimes avoid seeking help because they're afraid that talking about it will bring back memories or feelings that are too painful. But this can actually do more harm than good. Seeking help and emotional support through a trained professional is the best way to ensure long-term healing. Working through the pain sooner rather than later can help reduce symptoms like nightmares and flashbacks. It can also help someone avoid potentially harmful behaviors and emotions, like major depression or self-injury.

Rape survivors work through feelings differently. Ask your daughter what sort of counseling is preferable: Some people feel most comfortable talking one-on-one with a therapist. Others find that joining a support group where they can be with other survivors helps them to feel better, get their power back, and move on with their lives. In a support group, they can get help and might help others heal by sharing their experiences and ideas.

The emotional trauma caused by a sexual assault can be severe and long-lasting. The victim may be affected in many different ways. Although each person is unique, there are some feelings and reactions that most sexual assault victims experience. It may be helpful for your daughter to know about these responses. However, always remember that even though many victims experience similar reactions, there are still individual differences in how people respond to the trauma of rape. Your daughter may experience some or all of these symptoms. They may occur immediately, or one may have a delayed reaction weeks or months later. The feelings may be very intense at times. Sometimes the feelings seem to go away for a while and then come back again. Certain situations, such as seeing the assailant or testifying in court, may intensify the symptoms or cause them to reoccur.

Initially, most sexual assault victims react with shock and disbelief. They may feel numb and dazed, withdrawn and distant from other people. They may want to forget about what happened and avoid people or situations that remind them of the assault.

There may be periods when the victim is preoccupied with thoughts and feelings about the assault. She may have unwanted memories or flashbacks and nightmares. When she thinks about what happened, she may re-experience some of the sensations and feelings she had during the assault, such as fear and powerlessness.

Many survivors experience intense emotions in the aftermath of a sexual assault. At times, she may feel angry. She may also feel afraid, anxious or depressed.

Some victims have physical symptoms, such as sleep disturbances, headaches, and stomachaches. They may find that it is very difficult to concentrate on routine activities. They may also experience changes in your sexuality, such as a loss of interest in sex or avoidance of sexual situations.

Fears about personal safety are an almost universal response to a sexual assault. She may become fearful in situations and places where she was never frightened before. During a sexual assault most victims feel powerless and/or terrified of being killed or



seriously harmed. Afterwards, she may continue to feel frightened and vulnerable for a while.

Feelings of guilt and shame are common reactions following a sexual assault. Because of misconceptions about rape, some victims blame themselves, doubt their own judgment, or wonder if they were in some way responsible for the assault. Feelings of guilt and self-blame may be reinforced by the reactions of others, who, because of prevalent myths about rape, may blame the victim or criticize his or her behavior.

The victim may also feel ashamed. Some victims describe feeling dirty, devalued, and humiliated as a result of a sexual assault. Feelings of shame are often related to the powerlessness and helplessness victims experience during a sexual assault. Shame may also be a reaction to being forced by the assailant to participate in the crime.

Re: Alcohol Abuse. Please refer to session #4 in the online version of the eBook.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:12PM (-08:00)

## Helping Adolescents with Their Depression—

Tuesday, December 01, 2009

If you suspect that an adolescent in your life is suffering from depression, take action right away. Depression is very damaging when left untreated, so don't wait and hope that the symptoms will go away. Even if you're unsure that depression is the issue, the troublesome behaviors and emotions you're seeing in your adolescent are signs of a problem. Whether or not that problem turns out to be depression, it still needs to be addressed - the sooner the better.

The first thing you should do if you suspect depression is to talk to your adolescent about it. In a loving and non-judgmental way, share your concerns with your adolescent. Let him or her know what specific signs of depression you've noticed and why they worry you. Then encourage your child to open up about what he or she is going through.

Here are some important tips:

Avoid the blame game – It can be easy to blame yourself or another family member for your adolescent's depression, but it only adds to an already stressful situation. Furthermore, depression is normally caused by a number of factors, so it's unlikely—except in the case of abuse or neglect—that any loved one is “responsible”.

Be open with the family – Don't tiptoe around the issue of teen depression in an attempt to “protect” the other children. Kids know when something is wrong. When left in the dark, their imaginations will often jump to far worse conclusions. Be open about what is going on and invite your children to ask questions and share their feelings.

Be understanding. Living with a depressed adolescent can be difficult and draining. At times, you may experience exhaustion, rejection, despair, aggravation, or any other number of negative emotions. During this trying time, it's important to remember that your

child is not being difficult on purpose. Your adolescent is suffering, so do your best to be patient and understanding.

Don't give up if your adolescent shuts you out at first. Talking about depression can be very tough for adolescents. Be respectful of your child's comfort level while still emphasizing your concern and willingness to listen.

Don't try to talk adolescents out of their depression, even if their feelings or concerns appear silly or irrational to you. Simply acknowledge the pain and sadness they are feeling. If you don't, they will feel like you don't take their emotions seriously.

Encourage physical activity. Encourage your adolescent to stay active. Exercise can go a long way toward relieving the symptoms of depression, so find ways to incorporate it into your adolescent's day. Something as simple as walking the dog or going on a bike ride can be beneficial.

Encourage social activity. Isolation only makes depression worse, so encourage your adolescent to see friends and praise efforts to socialize. Offer to take your adolescent out with friends or suggest social activities that might be of interest, such as sports, after-school clubs, or an art class.

If your adolescent claims nothing is wrong, but has no explanation for what is causing the depressed behavior, you should trust your instincts. Remember that denial is a strong emotion. Furthermore, adolescents may not believe that what they're experiencing is the result of depression. If you see depression's warning signs, seek professional help. Neither you nor your adolescent is qualified to either diagnosis depression or rule it out, so see a doctor or psychologist who can.

Learn about depression. Just like you would if your child had a disease you knew very little about, read up on depression so that you can be your own "expert." The more you know, the better equipped you'll be to help your depressed adolescent. Encourage your adolescent to learn more about depression as well. Reading up on their condition can help depressed adolescents realize that they're not alone and give them a better understanding of what they're going through.

Let depressed adolescents know that you're there for them, fully and unconditionally. Hold back from asking a lot of questions (adolescents don't like to feel patronized or crowded), but make it clear that you're ready and willing to provide whatever support they need.

Reach out for support – Get the emotional support you need. Reach out to friends, join a support group, or see a therapist of your own. It's okay to feel overwhelmed, frustrated, helpless, or angry. The important thing is to talk about how your adolescent's depression is affecting you, rather than bottling up your emotions.

Remember the siblings – Depression in one child can cause stress or anxiety in other family members, so make sure "healthy" children are not ignored. Siblings may need special individual attention or professional help of their own to handle their feelings about the situation.

Resist any urge to criticize or pass judgment once your adolescent begins to talk. The important thing is that your child is communicating. Avoid offering unsolicited advice or

ultimatums as well.

Stay involved in treatment. Make sure your adolescent is following all treatment instructions and going to therapy. It's especially important that your child takes any prescribed medication as instructed. Track changes in your adolescent's condition, and call the doctor if depression symptoms seem to be getting worse.

Take care of yourself – In order to help a depressed adolescent, you need to stay healthy and positive yourself, so don't ignore your own needs. The stress of the situation can affect your own moods and emotions, so cultivate your well-being by eating right, getting enough sleep, and making time for things you enjoy.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:50AM (-08:00)

## Tips for Single Fathers

Tuesday, December 08, 2009



Most single fathers I know struggle to know where to start in the beginning. What should be first on my list, and how do I even begin to get my arms around the rest? Having talked to a number of single fathers who have successfully negotiated this transition with their children, let me offer the following recommendations...

As adults, we have at least learned some coping mechanisms in our life to deal with change. Often, our children are totally unprepared for having a single father as their primary caregiver. So as you help your children adjust, consider the following suggestions:

- Accept help. Often, as others you love see you struggle, they will ask if they can help. Learn to be a gracious receiver of their offers. Swallow your pride, recognize that you can't do it all, and express gratitude for the help of others.
- Consider early mornings. Once the children are up and around, it's harder to make time for you. And at night, there are lots of temptations like TV and the computer to distract you. Get up an hour earlier than the children and make time for exercise, reading, getting organized and maybe even some meditation. Investing one early morning hour in yourself can make a marked difference. One of the biggest challenges newly single fathers tell me about is the need to establish new routines when the other adult at home is not there anymore.
- Focus on health. Some fathers deal with the stress of this situation by holing up or binge eating. Make sure you don't go there. Make time for exercise, even if you have to do it with one or more of the children. Walk, run, hit the gym—just stay active. And make sure that you eat right. Resist the temptation to subsist on junk food. Keep lots of vegetables in your life.
- Get the children involved. A lot of routine chores are within the capability of the children. Chores like cleaning, sweeping, vacuuming and more are not beyond their skill level if you teach them what you expect. A chore chart can really help with reminding them and

keeping them accountable.

- Have laundry days. Trying to get ahead of and keep up with the laundry can be a big task. One new single father I know tossed all of the children' socks and bought 12 matching pairs for each youngster so mating socks became easy. Consider setting aside a couple of days a week for laundry. If your children are a little older, they can do their own with a little training. And if you are not used to separating clothes for washing, ask an experienced laundry-doer for some help. There are not many things more discouraging than having a nice white shirt being suddenly pink because it was washed in the wrong temperature water with the wrong colors.

- Have your own chore chart. One father I know got one of those little binders that hold punched 3 x 5 index cards with dividers for different days of the week. Under the Monday and Thursday tabs, he put cards for vacuuming; under the Saturday tab was a card for cleaning the bathroom. Every day he opened the binder to the right tab and knew what he had to get done that day. Find a simple system and stick to it. It will take a lot of the stress out of these routine duties.

- Make and keep promises. For whatever reason their mom is no longer at home, your kid's trust is likely shaken. Whether mom betrayed them by leaving or whether she died, they will not be very trusting, and, in their mind, for good reason. The best way to build trust with the children is to make and keep promises. Do what you say you will do, and don't make a promise you are not committed to keep. Consistency and honesty will help them find the courage to trust again. Losing a spouse for whatever reason can create all kinds of feelings in a man. And while you now in a very real sense have to be the principle support for the children, you can't be all they need without a little self care.

- Make time for introspection. You will find a need to take a deep look inside and be ready for this new challenge. Get a grip on your feelings. Writing them down in a journal or in a password-protected computer file can really be a good way of looking objectively. Consider your strengths and weaknesses and find ways to compensate for the things you have a hard time with. Get comfortable with yourself and it will go a long way to your healing efforts for yourself and your family.

- Show confidence. Children need to see that their father is confident and optimistic about the future. Let them know that you are OK and that with time your family will reach a new level of comfort and routine. Your attitude will make a huge difference in how they feel and cope now and later.

- Talk a lot. Many children will open up and want to talk to father or others about what has happened. Others will clam up or get busy being supportive to suppress their feelings. Your job is to keep them talking and to be a good listener. Encourage them to talk with you—if not with you, create a situation where they can talk to a trusted adult. Sometimes relatives, clergy, adult friends or therapists can help if they won't talk with you. But it is important to help them deal with their feelings and frustrations. Of particular importance is helping them see that the loss of their mother is not their fault.

More single-father tips...

Emotional Issues—

As a new single father, the most important things for you to do are:

1. Get on with your life. Do not spend time trying to figure it out, look forward.
2. If you are in therapy, after you get through the initial panic stage, try to spend some time thinking about what attracted you to someone with personality defects similar to what your wife has, so that you don't make the same mistake again. Another friend said, "If new potential girlfriends don't attend church regularly and say a prayer before meals, you don't want to get involved."
3. Reassure the children that this was not their fault, and that there is nothing they can do to fix it (to get you back with mom).
4. Talk about what has happened, with the children and with your friends. Once you become open and comfortable talking about it, you become more approachable by others, and options to resolve your problems begin to present themselves more readily.

Clothes—

Mornings were real tough in the beginning; "Where's this?", "Where's that?", "This doesn't fit."

Here's what I did to make our clothes issues easier:

1. All the socks went into storage. We went to WalMart and bought twelve pairs of identical socks for each youngster, twelve pairs for the boy and twelve for the girl so no matter what they find, they will match.
2. Be sure to take stuff that wrinkles out of the dryer right AWAY and put it on a hanger. If you do this, you can get away without ironing pants, shirts, etc.
3. Clothes are washed every day. This keeps wash from becoming overwhelming, and reduces frustration when things they want to wear are not available. After a while, it becomes easy to fit it into the evening/morning schedule.
4. We pulled all the clothes out of their drawers and spent a few hours sorting them. "What will you wear?" "What won't you wear?" "Why?" Stuff they won't or can't wear goes out. Things they like to wear stays. I did the same thing as for socks for a few shorts, shirts, etc. that were favorites. I went out and bought three of each, so they will always find something that they perceive to be okay to wear. Then I work on variety as they seem open to it.
5. I discovered that the major issue with washing clothes is that they come out of the dryer. Putting them in the washer, then transferring to the dryer is no problem, but when they come out, you have to do something with them. Here is what I do:
  - o Everything on a hanger goes in a closet where it is easily spotted, not buried in a drawer somewhere.
  - o My wife used to fold the clothes. I stopped this because it was a lot of work and makes the clothes difficult to find. I put a bar up over the washer dryer, so now anything that comes out of the dryer that can be hung on a hanger gets put on a hanger, including my casual t-shirts, girls outfits bottoms and tops together on a hanger, etc. (I had to buy

about 60 plastic hangers).

o The stuff that cannot be hung up (underwear, socks, etc.) goes into a plastic "sorter" box (WalMart again), and the children can put these away in the correct drawers. I labeled the drawers with masking tape so there is a bit of structure there too.

#### Housework—

My children are old enough to understand and follow a few basic rules. A few that we have that relate to housework are:

1. Don't do anything that creates more work for other people.
2. Don't put your hands on the walls.
3. No dirty dishes in the sink, they always go in the dishwasher.
4. No food or drink allowed in carpeted areas of the house.

The last one has been really successful for me, because you can analyze many actions and have the children think, "Does this create work for Father or someone else?"

#### Food—

I may be in better shape than some here, because I have always liked to cook and consider myself good at it, but my children are at a picky stage where they will not eat many things.

1. Go out when you just can't do anything else. I started to make a schedule and plan meals, but I found that for us, it was better just to come home and have multiple choices. Tuna Fish, Pizza, burgers on the grill, salad, all are easy, good and quick to make.
2. On days when there is just not enough time to make a full meal, we have frozen pizza or some such other quick food that they picked out.
3. Similar to what happened with the clothes, we sat down and made a list together of things that the children like to eat and will eat. Then, we go to the store and buy those things. When dinners are made, it is stuff they picked out and have already agreed to eat. We made sure to cover the major food groups, talked about the importance of balanced meals and agreed that they would each take a multi-vitamin every day.

#### Extra Time—

When do you find time to do these things? Well, I keep the children involved in scouting, church, etc. and use opportunities when they are on trips, visiting with friends, etc. to do major things like mowing the lawn, vacuuming, etc.

I now go to bed about 9-9:30PM, not long after the children go because I am so tired.

I have also started getting up at 5AM instead of 6:30 when the children get up. This gives me almost two hours of personal time when I am rested that I use to do personal things (read the paper, smoke a cigar, listen to music, etc.) and sometimes work (bills, cleaning, etc.) I find that the loss of sleep is compensated for by my feeling that things are done, and not hanging over my head. I am a much happier person all day having had some extra relaxation or work time in the morning.

Some of the themes so far that have helped make me more comfortable were:

1. Accept help from others when offered.
2. Forget about the wife, she is gone.
3. I rule the house, it does not rule me. I feel better and less stressed when things are under control and relatively clean. To me, this is worth losing sleep for.
4. Children like and need structure.
5. Simplify things that are difficult.
6. Take some time off to develop your new family "structure" for getting things done. It's unreasonable for anyone to expect you to continue working at the same performance level through an event like this.
7. Talk about what happened with your children and friends. Children, particularly need the emotional outlet and talking about it helps heal the hurt.
8. The children can pitch in.
9. You have to give up some sleep to get things done.

Finally, therapists, counselors, and others have told me that while it is unusual for a wife to leave her children, almost all of these cases are due to depression, alcoholism, or some other severe emotional disorder. In my case it was depression which led to alcohol abuse.

I was encouraged by many people to go to Al-Anon, which is a spin-off of Alcoholics Anonymous and is for people whose lives are affected by someone else's alcohol problem. Their big theme is to stop focusing on the person who is causing you the trouble and start improving your own situation.

David McLaughlin, MD (OPS Consultant: Psychiatry)  
 Online Parent Support  
 Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:46AM (-08:00)

## Motivating Your Child To Do Well In School

Monday, December 14, 2009

My son was a excellent student in high school used to have awards in Science, Music, and Arts i was so proud as parent and also got high results at GCSE exams mostly A's & A\* but since he start college he is under achieving student to the point he failed subjects last year, notice not doing his college work progress report are disappointing, noticed teachers are feed up as i feel the same and today he told me sorry that he is not doing his work my son said to me i do not want to do my work and said i do not know why? My question why my son is feeling this way?

.....

As young people today are confronted with new and unfamiliar issues when compared with young people in any recent or long-term past, many moms and dads struggle to identify the catalysts or strategies to stimulate and motivate their young people. Today's young people are faced with choices and circumstances their moms and dads didn't face. They live in a world where it requires a security badge to enter a high school...where they compete scholastically with 4.9 G.P.A.s...where classmates cheat using cell phone technology...where world events and economic issues make it scary to contemplate the future. Is it any wonder young people often lack motivation?

As many experts reveal, a loss or lack of motivation in young people is often symptomatic

of far greater issues, such as a lack of self-confidence, a lack of esteem, and so forth. To boost young people' feelings of enthusiasm and drive, moms and dads can consider some expert advice and strategies for support.

Most of the problems of education are problems of motivation...When a youngster is self-motivated, the teacher cannot keep him from learning. Students who lack motivation often display a gap between their abilities and their academic output and effort. While this can appear at a very young age, including many elementary grades and ages, the lack of motivation is most strongly evident as students transition from middle and high school.

As students lose motivation at a young age, their inability to perform and their desire to achieve becomes a learned behavior, as students are labeled as "underachievers," resulting in a student's loss of self-esteem and confidence. A highly intelligent teen may be denied entrance into honor classes and urged to take either general or vocational classes because of a lackluster middle school performance. Such a situation easily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If students lose enthusiasm at a young age, it is imperative that school leaders and moms and dads step in to guide these younger students towards more positive performance early on, as early-intervention can help prevent long-term consequences.

When an adolescent lacks motivation, the end result is often a teen lacking self-confidence, a teen with a bad attitude, or perhaps even a teen with behavior problems. When moms and dads are confronted with issues relating to young people' behavior and motivation, there are a variety of expert-suggested strategies to help boost students' performance and attitudes.

Many experts assert that young people are most strongly encouraged and supported when they are forced to motivate themselves. Young people can learn how to motivate themselves by engaging in student clubs, groups, or organizations that foster positive peer influence solutions. For example, some clubs focus on interests that may connect with a teen's desired future career. In this case, students can determine their interests and goals, and then can simultaneously encounter clearer catalysts that drive their motivation and focus. If a student realizes he/she needs to attend college in order to achieve his/her dream, then the teen may encounter a new self-motivation to strive and succeed in school.

In addition to young people engaging in clubs and activities that stimulate a self-motivation process, there are also many summer camps and teen-based courses (outside of most high school programs) that focus on teaching young people. During such camps, the basics of independent living, such as budgeting, handling a checkbook, obtaining a car loan, finding and maintaining an apartment, using credit wisely, and community participation are taught.

By teaching young people the more important and complex lessons of life after high school, many young people are able to realize how their current choices impact their long-term success. As a result, young people are again able to learn how to self-motivate with the guidance of expert sources and opportunities.

Many public high schools have implemented mentor programs for students, where high-achieving students volunteer to support students who are struggling. Oftentimes these mentors can help fellow young people with homework, or can just serve as a troubled



teen's friend and companion, as a mentor can help a teen to constructively work through problems, discuss issues and pressures that students encounter in and outside of school, and so forth. This avenue is a positive alternative to forcing students to deal with struggles on their own—especially when moms and dads are finding it difficult to connect with their teen.

Moms and dads can also support un-motivated young people by helping their child identify their strengths and abilities. In doing so, moms and dads should simultaneously encourage their teen's achievements, while supporting their adolescent with enthusiasm and optimism. Adding to this approach, "If we are to motivate adolescents to learn what is in the curriculum, we must honor their learning styles, help them discover their unique abilities, and give them appropriate tools for successful achievement.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:56PM (-08:00)

## Teen Sex and Promiscuity

Monday, December 21, 2009

My 13 year old daughter is sexually promiscuous. I know she has had sex twice with one boy, one time being in a public toilet. She is not in a relationship with him. I know she has kissed three different boys this week. I cannot watch her 24 hours a day and I think that she will damage herself psychologically if she continues this destructive behavior. She doesn't know that I know all of this, but knows I found out about the sex. Any advice?

.....

### Teen Sex and Promiscuity

Moms and dads dread the day that their youngster becomes sexually active. Girls in particular, seem to cause more concern because of the risk of teen pregnancy.

Understanding why adolescents have sex is one of the most important steps towards dealing with the situation.

#### Why Adolescents Decide to Have Sex—

No single factor can be blamed for all possible occurrences of teenage sex. However, some of the more common issues raised by adolescents include:

- a belief that having sex will make them more adult
- a negative self-image, believing that participating in sexual activity can increase their popularity
- in girls more than boys, a belief that sex will keep their partner interested in them and will provide the love they crave
- media influence such as television, music and the Internet
- overly strict moms and dads, increasing the chances of promiscuity when the opportunity arises
- peer pressure—a feeling that everyone else is having sex

[Twenty percent of all adolescents have had sex at least once before their fifteenth

birthday.]

#### Sex in the Media—

Sex is everywhere. Teens simply cannot avoid the topic. Researchers discovered that, in 2003, 83 percent of episodes of adolescents' twenty favorite television programs contained some reference to sexual behavior.

[If you were to watch an hour of music videos, on average, you'd see ninety three sexual situations.]

Even apparently innocuous family sports events are not free from sexual exploits. During the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show, over thirteen million kids under seventeen watched Justin Timberlake tear off items of Janet Jackson's clothing.

Try as we might—sex cannot be avoided.

#### Teenage Sex and the Internet—

Recently, the Internet has provided teens with an opportunity to satisfy their curiosity about sex. In the privacy of their bedrooms, adolescents can be exposed to an astonishing array of graphic pictures and video clips depicting erotic material.

Pornography is rife on the Internet, appearing as emails or pop-ups or even web sites designed to attract adolescents. While most adults simply ignore such intrusions, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to them. Pornographic material can give an impressionable teen a convoluted view of what is normal, healthy sexual behavior.

#### Dangers of Teenage Sex—

Teen pregnancy is by far the most publicized danger of underage sex. Statistics reveal that every year in the US, over 850,000 girls between the ages of fifteen and nineteen become pregnant. Equally worrying are the figures that suggest 20,000 girls under fourteen become pregnant annually; of those 8,000 go on to give birth.

Promiscuity is an urgent issue. Adolescents are much more likely to engage in unprotected sex with multiple partners. Half of all people infected with the HIV virus annually are thought to be between the ages of 15 and 24.

About 25 percent of all sexually active teens contract a sexually transmitted disease (STD) annually. Of those, eighty percent do not know they have a disease and run the risk of long-term health effects, such as infertility. Two percent of all girls between fifteen and nineteen have been diagnosed with Chlamydia.

#### What the Parent of a Teen Can Do—

Despite the prevalence of teenage sex, only about one third of moms and dads with sexually active fourteen-year-olds believe that their youngster had engaged in sex. However, of those kids, three-quarters used contraception the first time they had sex.

#### Signs that Your Teen is having Sex—

Adolescents who are dating someone who is at least two years older than they are twice as likely to engage in sexual activity. Furthermore, teens in a long-term relationship are considerably more likely to be having sex.

Teens with several social groups are less likely to be involved in intimate situations and are therefore less likely to be engaging in sex.

Tips for Moms and dads—

Experts have this advice:

- Believe it or not, many teens feel that their moms and dads are the most influential source of information on sex.
- Discuss sex with your youngster, from an early age, ideally pre-teen. Talking to your teen about sex encourages responsible behavior when it comes to sexual activity.
- Keep in mind that your teen gains a lot of information from simply watching how adults behave.
- Offer guidance, care and supervision. Adolescents are in need of parenting and feel more secure when boundaries are clear.

Sexuality is an important topic for your adolescent. Tackle it early, sensitively and in a matter-of-fact manner. Keep the lines of communication open as much as possible. Help your adolescent understand normal sexual urges and strategies for managing them healthfully.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:28AM (-08:00)

## How To Get Children Up For School In The Mornings

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Hi there. I have been working your program for a while now with my now eight-year-old son and while I have had some successes, I am still finding myself not knowing what to do at times. My son has a VERY hard time turning off the Wii, or stopping a game on the Wii before it is over (i.e., football). I give him a set amount of time to play and then I warn him as the ending time approaches, often several times, to prepare him. However, when the time comes (I often set a timer because he argues that the time can't possibly be up), he insists on finishing his game (esp. football - he insists on at least finishing the quarter he is in). Should I let him finish the 2 or 4 minutes or whatever of that quarter (which turns out to be at least double the time because of the clock stopping, as in real football) or should I stick to the time limit? I feel like this may be a place to not pick the battle, but it may be telling him that limits are negotiable and I don't want him carrying it over to school or eventually work. What do you think? I am also having trouble getting him to go to bed on time. I know you say he should suffer the natural consequence of getting up the next morning anyway and going to school tired, but he doesn't get up! He goes back to sleep or stays in bed for another 1/2 hour sometimes. I do tell him that he will go to school with his hair sticking up and uncombed and that he will have to take his toiletries and brush his teeth in the school, or that if he is not ready he will go into the school and tell his teacher why he can't make it to school that day (is that a good thing to say?) but he still

procrastinates until he is rushing, rushing, rushing out the door with his sister angry that he is making her late. I drive them 20 minutes to school each day and his sister has to be there 1/2 hour earlier in 2-week intervals because she is on the news team. Any suggestions??? Thanks so much and I do have more questions, but I will spread them out a bit for you!!! Thanks, K.

.....  
Re: Should I let him finish the 2 or 4 minutes or whatever of that quarter (which turns out to be at least double the time because of the clock stopping, as in real football) or should I stick to the time limit?

Here are some tips that apply:

Reward your son for not playing a video game for a certain period of time, whether it's per week or per day. This does not mean you should bribe him. However, rewarding him for good behavior every once in awhile might get him a bit more motivated than simply telling them to turn off his favorite game.

Keep the Wii in an area where all members have access to it. If it is in a bedroom - or even your son's room - there is more temptation and availability to your son. If you don't want him playing games on your family PC, make it clear and do not let any other family members play on the computer--including yourself!

Encourage your son to be a bit more active by reminding him of something that he really enjoys. You may also participate with him in an activity other than playing a video game to get him interested in something else. The more you do these things with your kids, the more it will become habit instead of gaming.

Fill the void with something educational and fun. Make it fun for your son when you've taken away an activity that he enjoys, but also incorporate some education into it. There are many different learning tools that are quite similar to video games that would make a great substitute to games.

Cut them off cold turkey. If you simply take away the console or take the game off your computer, there will certainly be some sort of resistance from your son. However, if the temptation is gone, he will be forced to find something else to do. Suggest a few outdoor activities or make plans for him to play with a friend, and soon the other activities will become staples in the house instead of the game.

Re: I am also having trouble getting him to go to bed on time.

Getting your son off his Wii earlier in the evening may help with this problem.

As long as you take responsibility for getting your son out of bed, he will let you do it. It may take a few days for them to get the hint, but once you stop working so hard, he will realize he has to change his behavior, or face certain consequences.

A natural consequence for oversleeping and being late to school is having to make up any schoolwork that was missed. You might also check with the school to see what the

policy is for repeated tardiness or missed classes. Don't protect your son from these consequences by making sure he makes that bus on time. In order to create less dramatic mornings, you have to let your son experience the consequences of not getting himself up and out the door.

You might tell your son: "You seem to have a hard time getting up in the morning, which tells me you aren't getting enough sleep. You need to be up by 6 am on school days. As of today, we are moving your bedtime back to 9:30 pm on school nights. Once you have shown us that you can get up on time for five days in a row, we'd be happy to move your bedtime back to 11:30 pm." If your son does not get up on time, simply state: "I know you want a later bedtime. You'll have to figure out how to get yourself up on time in order to have that privilege."

It may be hard for your son to go to sleep before 11 p.m. Going to bed by 9:30 PM is going to be a little "uncomfortable" for him. In time, the discomfort and annoyance of having to get into bed with the lights out and no electronics may motivate him to get out of bed on time in the morning. Once he has gotten up on his own for five days in a row, you can change the bedtime to a later hour. If he begins to oversleep again, change it back to 9:30 or 10:00 pm until he improves.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:07AM (-08:00)

## Daughter Dating Boy with Bad Reputation

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Hi Mark,

It's been awhile since I've had to email you. Thanks to your program, things have improved greatly in our home. We are experiencing some more difficulty at the moment and my husband and I are confused on how to handle the situation and would like your opinion. I will try to explain the situation as briefly as possible.

Our daughter is 16. Last year was a difficult year. My daughter was disrespectful at home and at school. She had social problems at school and was involved in some fighting. Her grades suffered. This year our relationships at home have improved greatly. She is trying hard to control her anger because she sees it gets her nowhere (thanks to your program and the "poker face" tip). She is still struggling academically, but there is less drama at school. She is respectful to her teachers and has been trying hard not to get in fights with her peers. Because of your tip on using an online monitoring program I have been able to keep track of what she is up to. She has not been perfect by any means, but for the most part she is staying out of trouble and I must say it appears that she is mostly honest with us. I heard her make the comment the other day "my parents always find out everything, it is so annoying". But she said it light heartedly.

Here is our current problem. In December, she started "dating" a 19yr.old boy. This boy does not have a good reputation. He has been in trouble with the law. Just this week he was arrested twice for getting into fights. Of course, our daughter swears they were not his fault. I've been told that the boy is somewhat mentally handicapped and is teased

about being "stupid". My oldest son has confirmed that this is true but says the boy does not know when to shut up and is constantly getting in fights and getting beat up. We were leery of her dating him to begin with and should have put a stop to it immediately, but because her behavior has been so much better, we did not. She is never with him when these incidents occur. In fact, she is only allowed to see him when she is supervised. After this last incident, we decided we do not want her to see him at all. We told her that even though he is good to her, the fact that he has a violent part to him could put her in danger. For two hours last night and two more hours today, she has been in a rage using every tactic she could to get us to change our mind. I wasn't sure whether to call the police or take her straight to the hospital. She threatened to run away and to kill herself. She admits that she is very depressed and will go for help- but only if we allow her to see him.

This is what I proposed to her:

- She could see him one time during the week and that would be Sunday. We would pick him up and they would both go to church with us and then he could spend the afternoon.
- She can talk to him on the phone.
- She has to show us some improvement in her school work.
- She must agree to some counseling to help her with her depression and her obsession with having a boyfriend.
- He would have to stay out of trouble.

Are we crazy for even considering this???? I have to say, I don't know him very well at all and am not sure I want him around our family. But as a Christian I feel we need to give him a chance and maybe make a difference in his life. Everyone else thinks we're nuts.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your opinion. We don't know where else to turn.

Sincerely,

AJ

.....

Re: Are we crazy for even considering this????

Not at all. I think you are largely on track. Congrats!

As parents, we are not very comfortable not knowing what is going on in our teenager's life. But as your daughter starts to date, you will need to take a step back and not try to know 'everything'. You may at first have a hard time and feel like something is wrong. That is normal – your parenting role is changing. Change always feels awkward at first. On the other hand, your daughter may want to chat about the experience. She may have some questions to ask. If so, make yourself available. But remember to try not to 'read into' any of the questions and begin prying.

All parents dread the day when their son or daughter comes home with a new love interest. There will be many relationships that you know will not work out. And while you might be tempted to share your opinion with your daughter, I would suggest you didn't.

One point I can't stress enough is to never tell your daughter you disapprove of her

boyfriend. This will only make her that much more attracted to him. If she asks your opinion, you can say that the boy isn't the person you would have chosen for her, but it's her life and she has to figure that out for herself.

If you keep telling her how bad of a person her boyfriend is, he could turn out to be your son-in-law. I know this from firsthand experience. My wife hated my daughter's high school boyfriend - even forbid her from seeing him. All this did was make her want to see him even more. At one point my daughter said to me, "When my boyfriend and I would have disagreements, I would not see that the relationship wasn't working. I would only see that I had to make it work to keep mom from knowing she was right about him all along."

You have a Romeo & Juliet phenomenon on your hands that will need to be diffused (if not, they will work harder at sneaking rendezvous behind your back).

Unfortunately, if your daughter wants to be with someone -- she'll find a way, no matter what you say or do. Parents can only guide their children in the right direction and hope for the best. If they do a good job, their children will make the right decision all on their own.

Since you will not be successful at keeping those two apart, you must adopt a philosophy of "if you can't beat 'em - join 'em." In other words, they should be able to see one another within limits, and you decide what those limits are. And it sounds like you have already decided on some very appropriate limits.

Good work,

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:28AM (-08:00)

## Stepson Problems

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Hello Mark,

First of all, thanks for being there. This is a scary and lonely time.

My problem is that my teen is a step-son- he came to live with us at 14- Bio Mom is addicted to pain meds, and was neglectful, letting him be a "free spirit" as she calls it. When we got him, he was failing at school....basically all of the issues you address. My husband WON'T follow thru with any discipline, and continues to let the tail wag the dog. My son is now 9, and I will do whatever I need to keep him off the path my step son has chosen. I have no support, voice etc with my stepson's actions, behavior, etc. How can I minimize the damaging effects on my 9 yr old? I don't want to leave, but also want to keep my son on the right path-- any resources for step parents who don't get back-up?

.....

Being a step parent has unique challenges that are not present in other family situations.

To create a happily blended family, you must balance respect and love, discipline and understanding. In this article, you will learn what it takes to create a happy home environment for your blended family.

When a single woman with kids marries a single man with kids, this union should be viewed as more than the union of husband and wife—it is the joining of two different cultures. Each family is a tribe unto itself and if this union is to work, each step parent must respect the others' family dynamics. Family dynamics can be as different as night and day. This is why you must come to grips with the idea that you have two different tribes living in your house.

So how does this work in a blended family? Before I answer that, take this first bit of step parenting advice and appreciate the power of the birth family. Recognize that your spouse is probably always going to be closer to his kids than yours. Know that if you constantly criticize your spouse's kids, you are creating the beginning of the end. Blood loyalties are usually stronger than marital ties. Although this may change over time—and one day, you may feel as close to your step kids as your own—the process takes time and experience and only occurs when a supportive, loving environment has been created.

The next important bit of step parenting advice is to respect your spouse's family dynamics. For instance, you may have a rigid children-do-not-talk-back rule in your family, while your spouse may be willing to listen to what his kids have to say and open to negotiation. If you try to impose your rules on your step children, especially when they are rules they did not grow up with, they will rebel. When this happens, they may use their father's love for them to drive a wedge between you. It happens subtly at first and you may not notice what is happening, until it is too late. Although you are the adult and you have more power, never underestimate the power of a youngster. Where possible, try to compromise parenting styles, as long as you both agree to help each other act from this compromise.

If a situation escalates, allow your spouse to discipline his own kids, while you attend to yours. When he is disciplining his kids, refrain from joining in or agreeing through words or body language. Be a silent bystander, so the youngster won't feel that the adults are ganging up on him.

Sometimes, kids of divorce have been enabled by the parents because unconsciously, they feel guilty. If you have a child or children in your home who seem to be constantly angry and lash out at others, consider a learn-at-home behavioral program that has shown to help.

The next piece of step parenting advice may seem odd to you—expect your step children to hate you. When I say "expect," I don't mean that you should turn expectations into reality, but that you must understand that kids of divorce usually want nothing more than their birth parents to get back together. Regardless of how you met your spouse, on some level, your step children may hate you and blame you for her parents being apart.

The youngster may also fear that you are trying to replace her mother. Assure her that you are not. Realize that in the youngster's eyes, you may never be considered as more than an aunt. Accept this role graciously. If your step child does like you, she may also feel conflicted. She may feel that expressing love toward you is tantamount to betraying her mother.



Step parenting advice: rather than focusing on the conflicts in your home (and there will be conflicts), invest your energy in creating good times. During the good times when everyone is happy, bonded and relaxed, you can gently and positively bring up the difficulties and ask your kids, step children and spouse what each person in the family can do to help resolve the problem. In this way, you make everyone feel that they are part of the solution.

When you need something, ask for it, rather than complaining and criticizing others for not giving it to you. If you ask, people will be more receptive and responsive, than if you harp on them. This is a good piece of advice for any family, blended or not.

Perhaps the most important piece of step parenting advice is to strive to be more reflective, insightful, compassionate and humane. Focus on the areas in which you need to grow as a parent and a human being and your kids and step children will follow your lead.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:21AM (-08:00)

## Son Refuses To Go To School

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

Terrible morning... my 15 yr. old missed the bus AGAIN. I told him that if he missed again he would have to walk (about 1 mile). He refused and went to his room. I tried to get him to go but he refused. Told him this was unacceptable and ended up driving him part of the way. What do I do now? He has had his phone and ipod taken away already.

.....

### School Refusers: Case Examples

Laura, an eight-year-old girl, has always had difficulty attending school. Since she began third grade two months ago, her problems have significantly worsened. She constantly begs to stay home from school, having tantrums that cause delay in dressing and often result in her missing the bus. After arriving at school, Laura frequently complains of stomachaches, headaches and a sore throat to her teacher and asks to visit the school nurse with whom she pleads to call her mother. Her mother typically picks her up early twice a week. When Laura gets home she spends the remainder of the afternoon watching TV and playing with her toys. When her mother is unable to pick her up early, Laura calls her mother's cell phone periodically throughout the afternoon to "check in" and reassure herself that nothing bad has happened. Laura's teacher has expressed concern about her missing so much class time which has resulted in incomplete assignments and difficulty learning.

James is a fourteen-year-old boy who has missed forty-three days of school since beginning the eighth grade four months ago. When home from school, James spends most of the day online or playing video games. On the days he does attend school he is typically late for his first period which enables him to avoid hanging out with other kids

before class. He always goes to the library during lunch. When he does go to class, he sits in the back of the classroom, never raises his hand and has difficulty working on group projects. James' teachers have noticed that he is always absent on days that tests or book reports are scheduled. His parents have already punished him after his first report card came home since he received D's in Math and Social Studies and failed Gym for cutting. James' parents have started to wonder if they should change his school placement and have asked the school to arrange home tutoring while this alternative is explored.

#### Prevalence and defining characteristics—

As much as 28% of school aged kids in America refuse school at some point during their education.<sup>1</sup> School refusal behavior is as common among boys as girls. While any youngster aged 5-17 may refuse to attend school, most kids who refuse are 10-13 years old. Peaks in school refusal behavior are also seen at times of transition such as 5-6 and 14-15 years as kids enter new schools. Although the problem is considerably more prevalent in some urban areas, it is seen equally across socioeconomic levels.

Laura and James are just two examples of how school refusal manifests in kids. The hallmark of this behavior is its heterogeneity. Defined as substantial, child-motivated refusal to attend school and/or difficulties remaining in class for an entire day, the term "school refusal behavior" replaces obsolete terms such as "truancy" or "school phobia," because such labels do not adequately or accurately represent all kids who have difficulty attending school. School refusal behavior is seen as a continuum that includes kids who always miss school as well as those who rarely miss school but attend under duress. Hence, school refusal behavior is identified in kids aged 5-17 years who:

1. are entirely absent from school, and/or
2. attend school initially but leave during the course of the school day, and/or
3. go to school following crying, clinging, tantrums or other intense behavior problems, and/or
4. exhibit unusual distress during school days that leads to pleas for future absenteeism.

As evidenced by Laura and James, there are varying degrees of school refusal behavior. Initial school refusal behavior for a brief period may resolve without intervention. Substantial school refusal behavior occurs for a minimum of two weeks. Acute school refusal behavior involves cases lasting two weeks to one year, being a consistent problem for the majority of that time. Chronic school refusal behavior interferes with two or more academic years as this refers to cases lasting more than one calendar year. Kids who are absent from school as a result of chronic physical illness, school withdrawal which is motivated by parents or societal conditions such as homelessness, or running away to avoid abuse should not be included in the above definition of school refusal behavior as these factors are not child-initiated.

While some school refusers exhibit a more heterogeneous presentation, typically these kids can be categorized into two main types of troublesome behavior -- internalizing or externalizing problems. The most prevalent internalizing problems are generalized worrying ("the worry-wart"), social anxiety and isolation, depression, fatigue, and physical complaints (e.g. stomachaches, nausea, tremors and headaches). The most prevalent externalizing problems are tantrums (including crying and screaming), verbal and physical aggression, and oppositional behavior.

## The cause and maintenance of school refusal behavior—

Laura had several physiological symptoms at school and went home to be with her mother and play. James on the other hand, avoided potentially distressing social and evaluative situations at school which negatively impacted his academic performance. Although many behaviors characterize kids who refuse school, there are a few variables that serve to cause and maintain this problem. School refusal behavior occurs for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To avoid school-related objects or situations that cause general distress such as anxiety, depression or physiological symptoms
2. To escape uncomfortable peer interactions and/or academic performance situations such as test-taking or oral presentations
3. To pursue tangible reinforcement outside of school
4. To receive attention from significant others outside of school

The above four reasons for school refusal behavior can be explained by principles of reinforcement. Any one youngster can refuse school for one or more of these reasons. The first two reasons characterize kids who refuse school to avoid or escape something unpleasant (negative reinforcement). For example, one of the reasons for Laura's crying in the morning is her fear of riding the school bus. By tantruming she accomplishes her goal of avoiding the school-related object (the school bus) that causes her distress. Another example of negative reinforcement is when James escapes aversive peer interactions and exams by school refusing. The third and fourth reasons characterize kids who refuse school to gain rewards (positive reinforcement). Laura, as is common with many younger kids, tries to avoid school as a means of having her mother provide her with excessive attention and closeness. Thus, Laura's behavior in this situation may be associated with separation anxiety. Another instance of positive reinforcement is exemplified by James, who basically has more fun being at home on the computer and listening to music than being in school. It is important to note that alcohol and drug use can occur among adolescents who school refuse for one or more of the reasons listed above. For example, a teenager who is extremely socially anxious may drink alcohol as a way of enduring distressing social or evaluative situations. Another youngster who avoids school may smoke marijuana during school hours as a means of gaining acceptance by peers or simply because it is more enjoyable than attending school. While all forms of school refusal can be equally debilitating, typically, mental health professionals receive fewer referrals for kids who have internalizing as opposed to externalizing behavior problems. In other words, the kid who exhibits anxiety is less likely to receive treatment than the kid who is disruptive.

## Alternative School—

Kids who refuse to go to school typically do much better in an alternative school setting – one in which (a) the classes are smaller, (b) they get more one-on-one attention, and (c) they do most of their work on the comport.

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:25PM (-08:00)

## 5-Year-Old Hits Classmates

Thursday, January 28, 2010

Hi,

My out of control child is 5 years old. He is defiant, hits out at his classmates, he has poor motor skills (difficulty grasping a pencil so is behind his class mates with writing) It is the hitting that is causing concern... he has no privileges at home for hitting classmates in school. If the behaviour is repeated 3 days commence again, he is now on day 8 of continually repeating the behaviour. He does not appear concerned about the loss of his toys and no children's programmes on tv and will happily occupy himself with a piece of string, a spoon etc. (During the Christmas holiday we used your method for cheek, for example 'pick up the toys' the reply 'pick it up yourself' and a complete refusal to comply. The method worked well and the cheek has markedly decreased. THANKS.) Now we are just addressing hitting for the past 3 weeks with little effect. Please advise.

Many thanks,

A.

.....

"Child hitting" is a behavior that moms and dads need to address immediately and consistently. Many parents have written to me asking how to stop youngster from hitting - and about half of these parents have admitted that when their youngster hits them, they hit back to "teach the youngster what it feels like." This may not be the case with you however.

The most important factor in teaching a young kid not to hit is to make sure he doesn't see hitting at home, or is not hit himself. A young kid who hits should be immediately removed from the situation where the hitting occurred. If he is in a playground, then pick him up and go home. If he is outside your home playing, then he has to come inside. If he is inside the home, then he should go to the room where he sleeps, which represents a safe place for him.

As you remove him and put him in another place, such as his room, tell him that he needs time by himself to calm down. Don't tell him anything else -- he won't be able to pay attention when he's upset. (If he won't stay in his room, it is important to walk him calmly back to his room.)

Your son needs to understand that he is not being punished, but is experiencing the consequence of his actions. Then, AFTER he has time to compose himself, when he's calmer, you can talk more about your family's "no hitting" rule.

Positive results will not happen overnight, but this method can be very effective if are consistent. Hopefully his teachers will be using the same strategy.

Hitting, by any age person, could be in self-defense, or it could be a way of exerting power (might makes right theory), a way of getting what they want. Hitting might be an effective means of self-defense, or there might be better ways to defend one's self. There are better ways of getting what a person wants, and that is what kids want to find out, I

think, is the best way for them to get what they want. Moms and dads – though often quite confused themselves about how to get what they want! – can be a youngster's best advisor and helper in figuring out good ways (for everyone involved) to get what each person wants.

I would respond to any youngster of any age by trying to figure out what they want, and doing everything I can to help them get it. If the youngster is angry, I'd keep helping them get what they want. Trying to figure out why the youngster is angry might be intrusive and make things worse, I think.... kids often can't answer the questions of 'why' that parents/adults pepper them with, not having the words to explain what is in their minds or whatever. We make our best guesses and keep at it.

Mark

Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:36AM (-08:00)

## When Kids Won't Go To School

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

*"How do I get my 10-year-old daughter to school? She seems to have stomach aches or headaches constantly, and misses several days of school each week. When we tell her she must go – she screams and cries and seems to be genuinely afraid of going to school. What can we do?"*

.....

You need to be firm with her. Don't count on the problem going away if you ignore it. She could end up not ever going back. However, don't be angry with her as her anxiety and distress are real.

You need to find out what is troubling her. It could be school phobia ( a fear of school), separation anxiety (fear of leaving you or the home) or agoraphobia (fear of crowds and public places). These are all very real disorders.

If someone is bullying, teasing, embarrassing, or abusing her, then it could be the first diagnosis. Talk to her teachers to find out what they know and to inform them of your experiences with your daughter.

Take her to the doctor for a complete physical examination. Tell the doctor the whole story and ask him to rule out any serious illnesses.

If he rules out an illness, then believe what he says. Don't have a lot of expensive tests. Assume that your youngster is physically well and needs to go to school. Keep assuring her firmly and confidently that she'll be fine (and so will you) once she arrives. If she still claims of physical ailments, you have two options;

First, get her to school unless you determine that she truly is sick. In that case she would be running a fever, or have nausea and/ or diarrhea, etc. If she just tells you she doesn't feel well, that isn't enough to let her stay home. Adults often go to work with uncomfortable symptoms.

The second option is to believe her. Since she says she is too unwell to go to school, then clearly she is too unwell to be up and about the house. If she is sick then she is sick, and so she goes to bed: lights off, curtains closed, no TV, no special snacks. Ignore her and go about your normal daily routine. Make sure that the option of staying home is boring. If she is not sleeping then, ideally she should be doing some school work. Certainly there should be no friends or visitors to entertain her.

You can also establish some rewards for going to school.

Be firm and remain calm. Let her know that you expect her to go to school, but don't argue with her if she resists. The goal is for her to want to go back to school. Once she goes and finds out that she's fine, her previous symptoms should disappear.

Kids with school refusal are scared to go to school. They may be so scared that they won't leave the house. School refusal is most common in 5- and 6-year-olds and in 10- and 11-year-olds, but it can start at any age.

The problem might start after a youngster has been home for awhile, such as after a holiday, summer vacation, or brief illness. It also might happen after a stressful event, such as moving to a new house or the death of a pet or relative.

Kids who won't go to school often say they feel sick. They might wake up and say they have a headache, stomachache, or sore throat. If they stay home from school, the "illness" might go away, but it comes back the next morning before school. Some kids may have crying spells or temper tantrums.

Kids with school refusal may worry about the safety of their moms and dads or themselves. They may not want to be in a room by themselves, and they may be scared of the dark. They also may have trouble falling asleep by themselves and might have nightmares.

Kids who are truant (or "playing hooky") are not scared to go to school the way kids with school refusal are. The table below compares some of the characteristics of school refusal and truancy.

School refusal:

- The youngster usually wants to stay home because he or she feels safe there.
- The youngster might pretend to be sick or say he or she doesn't want to go to school.
- The youngster is unreasonably scared of going to school.

Truancy:

- The youngster chooses not to go to school.
- The youngster may have antisocial behaviors such as delinquency, lying, and stealing.
- The youngster skips school and doesn't tell his or her moms and dads.

Take your youngster to the doctor. Anxiety or a physical illness might be causing the problem. You also should talk to your youngster's teacher or school counselor. Your youngster's doctor will be able to rule out any illness that may be causing the problem.

Unreasonable fears about leaving home can be treated. Moms and dads must keep trying to get their youngster to go back to school. Your youngster's doctor may want your youngster to talk to a psychologist, social worker, or youngster psychiatrist. The doctor also might prescribe medicine to help with your youngster's anxiety.

The longer your youngster stays out of school, the harder it will be to return. The goal of treatment is to help your youngster learn ways to reduce anxiety and return to school.

Kids who do not go to school for long periods may develop serious learning setbacks or social problems. Kids who do not get professional help might have emotional problems such as anxiety when they get older. Early treatment of this problem is important for your youngster's well-being.

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:06AM (-08:00)

## Brother Bullies Younger Sibs

Wednesday, February 03, 2010

Dear Mark,

We have greatly benefitted from your online parenting book and we have watched you on YouTube. Our son aged 10 [will be 11 in May] has been diagnosed with autism and ADHD. We have 4 other children, and we try to run a loving but disciplined home. Though my son is not out of control, he is very aggressive and rude from the off, without any provocation. We feel very undermined because of his behaviour, especially in front of the other children. I feel very sad and depressed when he behaves like this, which is most of the time. He bullies his younger siblings, and causes a great deal of tension and unhappiness at home. The autism is the reason for his lack of social skills but why is he so angry, unhelpful and unpleasant in an environment that is mild mannered? Is it because he is a bad tempered person who happens to have autism and ADHD?

Please forgive me if I am missing the obvious. Thank you very much for your time and patience.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

A.

.....

Approach the bullying situation in three distinct ways:

1. Ask yourself if you think that the mocking and harassing by the older brother to the younger sibling is only a superficial encounter between siblings or if there's a deep-seeded resentment involved. The older brother may be displacing anger that he feels in another area of his life and taking it out on the closest possible victim, his sibling. You don't want the younger sibling to see himself as a victim. If the interactions stem from unresolved familial issues, one or both of the children may need therapy.

2. Notice when they get along. What are they doing? Playing video games, riding bicycles, listening to music? Whatever it happens to be, see what you can do to create

more opportunities for them to engage in these activities together. When they're engaging in an activity together, they are building their relationship.

3. Stop the older brother from mocking and harassing his younger sibling. When he starts in, assume control of the situation, step between the children and stop it immediately. Say something like, "Mocking and harassing your brother is not OK. I will not allow one kid I love to harm — even with words — another kid I love." Use powerful — but not threatening — body language and tone of voice. These interactions between the siblings are likely a negative habit embedded in their relationship. By stopping these interactions quickly, the kids will need to find another way — hopefully a positive one — of interacting.

4. When they do get along with one another, be sure to catch them in the act of "being good" and extend a dose of acknowledgment and praise: "I see you guys are getting along - that's you being respectful - good work."

Most bullying situations start in the home, sometimes delivered from parent to kid and other times between siblings. The children need to learn better ways to interact because neither will succeed well in relationships if they generalize the bullying or the victim roles to other situations.

Mark

### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 02:36PM (-08:00)

## **The Trials of Being a Stepmother**

**Thursday, February 04, 2010**

There's no doubt that being a stepmother is one of the most difficult roles any adult will ever assume. So much pain can be avoided if you can agree on some very basic definitions of that role, and be alert to sensitivities with it.

To handle this situation with the utmost efficiency, both the biological parent and the stepmother should begin with an open and candid discussion about the fears and expectations regarding the relationship with the kids. Each should know what the other expects concerning the stepmother's involvement in guiding, supervising and disciplining the kids. Once you understand what each other's expectations are, you have a place to start shaping what the stepmother role will be. I always think it's important to first identify what you can agree on and thereby narrow your differences. How you ultimately define the stepmother role will, of course, be up to you. The following are my recommendations based on what I've seen work, what I've seen fail and how I think it's best to set up and define the stepmother role:

1. If you as a biological parent are having frustrations with the stepparent and what they're doing in relation to your kids, I encourage you at a very early point to stop complaining and start specifically asking for what you want and need. If, for example, you feel they're spending more time playing games with their kids, ask them specifically, for example, to play three board games per week with your youngster. Specifically ask for what you specifically want.

2. If you're the stepmother in a truly blended family, where both you and your spouse



have kids being merged into a "yours, mine and ours" scenario, you must take great care not to be perceived as playing favorites through a double standard in which your kids enjoy a better standard of treatment than your step children. The truth is, however unpopular or politically incorrect it may be to say, you'll very likely have decidedly stronger positive emotional feelings for your biological kids than for your step children, at least in the beginning. You'll need to cloak this difference in emotional intensity. As time goes on and you share life experiences with your step children, there will be a leveling of emotions toward all of the kids. In the meantime, you should be hypersensitive to the need to deal with each in a like fashion. It can be very helpful in the early stages to actually quantify and balance the time, activities and money spent on biological and non-biological kids.

3. In relating to all the kids, the stepparent should seek to define her relationship as that of an ally and supporter. Whether the stepparent is the same or opposite-sexed parent, their presence can play an important balancing role in terms of modeling and information-giving about life from the male or female point of view. The role of ally and supporter is in no way to be construed as an attempt to replace the biological parent.

4. It's important that the stepmother not have unrealistic expectations about their level of closeness or intimacy with the step children. Relationships are built, and it takes time and shared experiences to create a meaningful one. The stepmother should also be aware that the youngster may be experiencing a fair amount of emotional confusion — and may in fact feel guilty that they're betraying their biological mother by having a close and caring relationship with their stepmother. Great care and patience should be taken to allow the youngster an opportunity to work through those feelings.

5. It's my strong belief that unless you as the stepmother are added to the family when the kids are very young, it will most likely be very difficult for you to discipline your spouse's kids. Every situation is different, but in most situations, disciplining your non-biological kids is fraught with danger, since it's likely to create resentment on the part of your spouse. Again, this isn't always the case, and if that's not the circumstance in your family, that's great, because it can give the biological parent an additional resource for handling discipline issues. While I don't believe it's very likely a workable situation for a stepmother to be a direct disciplinarian, it's extremely important that the stepmother be an active supporter of the biological parent's disciplinary efforts. Both biological parents and stepparents should discuss the rules of the house and negotiate an agreement for what standards the kids will be held to. This element of family life should be subject to the same negotiation and joint ownership as any other family situation.

6. The stepmother should actively support the youngster's relationship with the biological mother no longer in the home. If you are in the role of stepmother, you should make it a priority to nurture a relationship between you and the biological mother and to find every possible way you can to support a relationship between her and her kids. By taking the high road of facilitation, you'll find it easier to overcome feelings of resentment both on the part of the biological mother and the kids she no longer has daily access to. This may require some real internal commitment on your part, because supporting your step children's relationship with their biological but absent parent may seem tantamount to also supporting that parent's relationship with your spouse. Don't let jealousy or envy of the bond they share with their kids or the working relationship and history with your current mate because you to be less than supportive of that relationship.

7. The stepmother, although not actively initiating direct discipline, should certainly work

to maintain the normal boundaries that exist between an adult and a youngster. Although it may be the biological parent who delivers an initial consequence for misbehavior, it's important that the stepmother be active in support of that decision, and care should be taken that proper respect and acknowledgment of the stepmother be given. In other words, a stepfather is not simply one's mother's husband. He is in fact an adult and an authority figure in the home.

In summary, let me say it's true that it's difficult to see things through someone else's eyes if you haven't walked in their shoes. Whether you're the stepparent or it's your spouse who's in that role, talk frequently about how it's going and what the experience is from the other's point of view. If both of you have good intentions and a loving heart, this can be worked out. The key is to remember that the kids are passengers on this train. They didn't get an opportunity to choose whether they wanted a new family member, so great care and patience should be taken to help them adapt to the situation.

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:07AM (-08:00)

## Son Won't Come Home On Weekends

Friday, February 05, 2010

*Dear Mark,*

*Can you please help me manage this situation? My son is 15 and will not come home at the weekends. I said to him that the rule is to be home at weekends by 11.30 and he is not to stay out, unless I am happy who he is staying with and have spoken to the parents. The consequence of this is no pocket money at all. It doesn't seem to matter to him... he is probably stealing money or stuff anyway. He is using hash and has got very abusive in the home. Now I get a text from him saying he is staying in a friend's house that I don't know and will not give me the number. He will not come back now until Sunday. I don't know what else to do. The money doesn't seem to matter.*

*He is in trouble with the police, has changed his friends to hash friends, is aggressive and has thrashed the house. My mother is sick down the country and will not come down with me to visit her which means I can't leave the city to visit.*

*Any suggestions would be welcome.*

*P.*

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"Situational Runaways" are the largest group of runaways, comprised of young people who leave home for a day or two after a disagreement with parents – or for the weekend. Although they may be seen in runaway shelters or spend a brief time on the street, they usually return home within a few days. A small percentage may repeat this behavior and remain away for longer periods. If so, they become a part of the chronic runaway group.

The suburban kid who runs to a friend's house the first time may turn into a chronic runaway who eventually finds his way to the heart of the nearby city, where other rootless kids hang out.

As much as you would like to build a wall around them, it is their choice whether or not to walk out the door. The phrase I use, "There are no bars on these windows, and the doors only lock people out." This is harsh, and I know it, but it also very much the truth. As a parent I can be a safety net, a tool box, and an emotional punching bag, but I refuse to be a chain.

Unfortunately we can't completely prevent teens from running away, but here are a few suggestions that may help:

- Call the police. You don't have to wait 24 hours to report a missing minor. Be aware that because this is considered a common domestic issue, finding runaways is not always a priority for the police department unless your child is under 13 or there is reason to believe that he or she is in immediate danger. You'll need to do most of the footwork yourself. However, the police will keep watch and return your child to you if he or she is found. It's also important to file a report in case you are unable to find your child or a situation arises where help is needed.
- Call your child's friends. Your teen may still be in contact with them. It's especially important to remain calm when you speak to them. Otherwise, they may not be willing to help. Speak to the parents, as well. They may be able to give you other phone numbers to call. Ask them to contact you if they hear anything.
- Don't scream and yell, or threaten your teen, this will only make them want to leave more.
- Go through your child's bedroom. Look through notebooks and drawers. Your child may have left a note behind. There may also be addresses and phone numbers. Visit the addresses and call the phone numbers if you haven't already.
- Remain calm. This is probably the most difficult thing to do when your teen runs away, but it's important. Keeping your emotions in check will make it easier to stay efficient and organized. You'll also need help from other people and they'll be more willing and open if you remain calm.
- Try not to interrupt your teenager when they do come to you to talk, sometimes it helps the most to just listen. If you don't agree with your child at least listen to their side, then calmly give your side, if things start to get out of control, take a break.
- Try showing your teen respect and keep communication open, listening to what they have to say.

Mark

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:06PM (-08:00)

## 18-year-old daughter is threatening to move out...

Sunday, February 07, 2010

### Question

My 18 year old daughter is dating a 21 year old guy with no job, not in school. He has been on his own since 16 ...mom was a drug abuser. My daughter has graduated from high school and is now attending community college and living at home. She says she can't live by our rules anymore. She has already spent 2 nights in the past month with him at a friend's house (he is sleeping on the couch because he has no place of his own.) She keeps saying she wants to be on her own and is threatening to move.

WE have told her that if she moves out she can't take her car. She also will be on her own financially. She says if we take her car, then we are jeopardizing her future b/c she will have no way to get to class! We told her no, she is jeopardizing her future. She suffers from depression, ADD, asthma, irritable bowel. She is on many meds. I can't imagine what would happen if she was on her own. How would she afford her meds? Illegal activity would be a big possibility. I don't want to drive her to this. We have taken her to therapists and then she refuses to go after a few sessions. I feel like I am at my wit's end with nowhere to turn.

### Answer

Let her go and learn some valuable life lessons!

Your daughter declares she is going to move out and be on her own. She does not need curfews or your advice. So, what do you do since talking endlessly and arguing has not been productive? You say, "O.K.", and leave her standing mouth agape and in shock. However, you did not arrive at this decision lightly. You and your spouse have discussed this thoroughly and you have agreed on a plan.

Once the initial shock has sunk in, and before the child begins her celebration of freedom, you sit down and lay out the terms of this agreement. This is not a total free-for-all (contrary to her belief). In reality, you are still in charge and she needs to understand that her desire for freedom comes with responsibility. This is the time to draft a behavior contract, which stipulates what you will - and will not - do as the parent, what she is - and is not - allowed to do as the adult-child, and what the consequences are in those cases she violates any terms of the contract.

### Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 01:27PM (-08:00)

## Son Is Verbally Abusive

Tuesday, February 09, 2010

Mark,

Thanks for your prompt response, the most pressing for now is for him not to be very loud and verbally abusive at home (FYI-My son is 6 ft tall and I'm 5"3. and it is very intimidating at times). Also, I want him to be self-reliant. I totally get your topic on that.

We've very sensible about that until 2 yrs ago that I was a bit indulgent with them. I guess I was over compensating for the loss of their father and I put that to an end and explained to them our priorities.

My question Mark with your experience, do I have a chance to turn him around? Every counselor that I consulted, their advise is for him to go to counseling, w/o telling me how to effectively convince him how can I persuade him without being controlling and he thinks kids who go to counseling have head problem. I just want him to be responsible and accountable for his actions.

Gratefully,

C.

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Aggression or violence towards moms and dads (or other family members) by their kids or adolescents is more common than most people believe and it is something that is usually not talked about. It can involve abusive language, frightening, threatening or physically hurting a parent (pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing things), hurting pets, damaging furniture and property, or threatening with knives or weapons. Whether it is a one-off incident or ongoing, it must be dealt with.

Kids may be aggressive towards moms and dads for a number of reasons. None of the following reasons excuse violent or aggressive behavior, but they may help moms and dads understand why some kids, especially adolescents do it:

- Drugs or alcohol, the loss of a job or a broken relationship can all be triggers that lead to violence.
- They do not know of any other way to solve problems or get what they want (lashing out at someone or something is all they know).
- They have grown up in a household where they have seen adults (sometimes moms and dads or partners) being angry, and using violence towards them or others (this behavior is seen as normal in their eyes).
- They have not learned how to control or manage their feelings, especially angry ones and so just act out without using any self discipline.
- They have not learned to value or respect other people or their property.
- They may be going through a really difficult time and cannot cope with the stresses in their own lives.
- They may have a disability and have not been able to learn other ways of behaving.
- They may have an acute mental illness and be very frightened.
- They may have used drugs that can trigger an acute psychosis and violent behavior.
- They see the parent as weak and powerless (it is often the mother), or they think that this is how women can be treated.

Most moms and dads whose kids attack them in this way can feel very scared, very powerless, lonely, sometimes embarrassed, ashamed and guilty. They feel they have lost control in the home.

- Although taking a tough stand can be difficult it is very important to do. When a teenager is violent toward a parent, no matter how much she might excuse her behavior

("it was really mum's fault, she pushed me to it") she can never feel all right about it. If she is never made to stop, she will probably repeat the same pattern in other relationships or in the work place. It will continue to cause problems in her life and can even lead to problems with the law unless she is stopped and can learn other ways to deal with her anger.

- Be prepared to make some tough decisions, even though your confidence feels shattered.
- Decide on your 'bottom line'. You need to be very clear and carry out what you have said will happen when he has overstepped this line. This may mean your teenager leaves your home either by agreement or by using the police and/or a restraining order. You may find this very hard to do. Get support from someone who understands.
- If the behavior is out of character for your teenager and has started only recently, think about what else may have happened or changed lately. For example, has anyone new had contact with your family recently or have there been changes in the family or with his friends? Has anything happened in these relationships? Is your teenager depressed? See the topic 'Teenage depression'. Has your teenager been taking drugs?
- If your other kids are being harmed in any way by your teenager, you must do something to protect them.
- Look at the situation from your teenager's point of view, no matter how unreasonable it seems. Think about how your behavior (from his point of view) might be contributing to the situation (even if you don't think it could be).
- Notice what your teenager does well and talk to him about it. Adolescents especially do not need reminders of their failures.
- Remember that whatever has happened in your relationship with your teenager, there is no excuse for violence.
- Spend some time supporting what he likes doing if he will let you, eg watching him play sport or listening to his music.
- Taking a tough stand helps to force your youngster to face his violence - he then has the chance to learn other ways of dealing with anger.
- Think about what happens as a fight brews. What are the warning signs? When these signs are present, make sure you separate from each other (you may have to leave the house). If so, take your younger kids with you so they don't become the victims of violence. Talk about concerns only when you are both calm.
- Think about your favorite image of your teenager. Do you still think of her as she was when she was little? You may need to come to grips with the fact that she is no longer a youngster.
- Think what the fights are most often about. Work out what things you are not prepared to move your position on, what ones you are prepared to give way on and what you can leave for your teenager to sort out.
- You need to take some control in your home. You may not be able to change or stop your teenager's behavior, but you can take a stand for what you are prepared to put up with in your home. This is important especially if there are younger kids who may feel frightened and need your help to feel safe.

Violence towards moms and dads or other family members is unacceptable and is recognized by the police as a crime. It is very difficult to make the decision to call the police and possibly have your youngster charged, but you need to keep yourself and others safe.

- You are likely to feel guilt, anger, sadness and fear.
- You may feel that you are betraying your youngster and that this will put his or her future at risk.

Calling the police can help to calm the situation, support you to regain control and begin to rebuild a respectful relationship with your youngster.

What will happen? The police can help to calm an explosive situation or protect other family members. They will give advice and ask what action you want taken, if any.

What action can they take? If you would like the police to take further action the young person will be taken for a formal interview at the nearest police station. The police can deal with the young person by:

- Arranging a family conference
- Issuing a formal caution
- Issuing an informal caution
- Proceeding through the Youth Court

If the offense is serious the young person can be arrested and taken into custody.

- Kids under 10 years cannot be charged, but police can still be called for assistance and advice.
- If the young person is between 10 and 18 years old, cases are handled within the Juvenile Justice system. The court will decide upon appropriate action if it determined that a crime has occurred. However this information will not be released when a criminal history is requested (eg by an employer).
- If you do not want to take action, police keep the matter on file and it can be followed up at a later time.
- Young people over 18 are considered adults and would be dealt with through the Magistrates Court. If convicted this would be recorded as part of a criminal history and will be released if a criminal history is requested. (An employer can only get a criminal history record if the person agrees to this, but not agreeing may affect employment opportunities).

Regardless of the future impact on your youngster it is important to take action to ensure the safety of yourself and other family members - you all have the right to feel safe.

Summary—

- Call the police if you or others in your family are at risk.
- Deal with this problem... it won't go away.
- Decide on your bottom line, make it known in advance, mean it and carry it out.
- Find out what works for other people.
- Look after your self esteem... you may feel you have lost it altogether or it needs repairing.
- Speak to someone who understands this sort of behavior and who can support you.
- Take some control... for the sake of yourself, your teenager and your other kids.
- You can love your youngster but you do not have to put up with all his behavior.

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:37AM (-08:00)

# Teens and Grief

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

I'm not sure who's more out of control, my 14 yo daughter or me. She does schoolwork, but not to her G-d given ability, picks fights when anything is asked of her, and while she has begun with a new therapist, she is defiant and angry beyond words.

She's lost her uncle, father and both paternal grandparents in the last 3 years: she says she doesn't sleep and she wants a psychiatrist and pill to make things better. I know that she is hurting, but the lashing out has me at my wit's end.

She is only civil to me if she wants something, and "doesn't care" about anything or anyone - or so she says.

She's lost her computer privileges for backtalk. She's lost her guitar because she is up all hours of the night keeping me awake and not getting sleep. As a solo parent, I have reached the end of my rope.

Suggestions?

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Each year thousands of teens experience the death of someone they love. When a parent, sibling, friend or relative dies, adolescents feel the overwhelming loss of someone who helped shape their fragile self-identities. And these feelings about the death become a part of their lives forever.

Caring grown-ups can help adolescents during this time. If adults are open, honest and loving, experiencing the loss of someone loved can be a chance for young people to learn about both the joy and pain that comes from caring deeply for others.

- Many Adolescents Are Told To "Be Strong". Sad to say, many grown-ups who lack understanding of their experience discourage adolescents from sharing their grief. Bereaved adolescents give out all kinds of signs that they are struggling with complex feelings, yet are often pressured to act as they are doing better than they really are. When a parent dies, many adolescents are told to "be strong" and "carry on" for the surviving parent. They may not know if they will survive themselves let alone be able to support someone else. Obviously, these kinds of conflicts hinder the "work of mourning".

- Relationship Conflicts May Exist. As adolescents strive for their independence, relationship conflicts with family members often occur. A normal, though trying way in which adolescents separate from their moms and dads is by going through a period of devaluation. If a parent dies while the adolescent is emotionally and physically pushing the parent away, there is often a sense of guilt and "unfinished business". While the need to create distance is normal we can easily see how this complicates the experience of mourning.

- Support May Be Lacking. Many people assume that adolescents have supportive friends and family who will be continually available to them. In reality, this may not be true at all. The lack of available support often relates to the social expectations placed on the



teen. They are usually expected to be “grown up” and support other members of the family, particularly a surviving parent and/or younger brothers and sisters. Many adolescents have been told, “now, you will have to take care of your family.” When an adolescent feels a responsibility to “care for the family”, he or she does not have the opportunity—or the permission to mourn. Sometimes we assume that teenagers will find comfort from their peers. But when it comes to death, this may not be true. It seems that unless friends have experienced grief themselves, they project their own feelings of helplessness by ignoring the subject of loss entirely.

- **Teen Years Can Be Naturally Difficult.** Adolescents are no longer children, yet neither are they grown-ups. With the exception of infancy, no developmental period is so filled with change as adolescence. Leaving the security of childhood, the adolescent begins the process of separation from moms and dads. The death of a parent or sibling, then, can be a particularly devastating experience during this already difficult period. At the same time the bereaved teen is confronted by the death of someone loved, he or she also faces psychological, physiological and academic pressures. While adolescents may begin to look like “men” or “women”, they will still need consistent and compassionate support as they do the work of mourning, because physical development does not always equal emotional maturity.

- **Adolescents Often Experience Sudden Deaths.** The grief that adolescents experience often comes suddenly and unexpectedly. A parent may die of a sudden heart attack, a brother or sister may be killed in an auto accident, or a friend may commit suicide. The very nature of these deaths often results in a prolonged and heightened sense of unreality.

As we have discussed, there are many reasons why healthy grieving can be especially difficult for teenagers. Some grieving adolescents may even behave in ways that seem inappropriate or frightening. Be on the watch for:

- **academic failure or indifference to school-related activities**
- **denying pain while at the same time acting overly strong or mature**
- **deterioration of relationships with family and friends**
- **risk-taking behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, fighting, and sexual experimentation**
- **symptoms of chronic depression, sleeping difficulties, restlessness and low self esteem**

To help an adolescent who is having a particularly hard time with his or her loss, explore the full spectrum of helping services in your community. School counselors, church groups and private therapists are appropriate resources for some young people, while others may just need a little more time and attention from caring adults like you. The important thing is that you help the grieving teen find safe and nurturing emotional outlets at this difficult time.

How grown-ups respond when someone loved dies has a major effect on the way adolescents react to the death. Sometimes adults don't want to talk about the death, assuming that by doing so, young people will be spared some of the pain and sadness. However, the reality is very simple: adolescents grieve anyway.

Adolescents often need caring grown-ups to confirm that it's all right to be sad and to feel a multitude of emotions when someone they love dies. They also usually need help

understanding that the hurt they feel now won't last forever. When ignored, adolescents may suffer more from feeling isolated than from the actual death itself. Worse yet, they feel all alone in their grief.

Peer support groups are one of the best ways to help bereaved adolescents heal. They are allowed and encouraged to tell their stories as much, and as often, as they like. In this setting most will be willing to acknowledge that death has resulted in their life being forever changed. You may be able to help adolescents find such a group. This practical effort on your part will be appreciated.

Remember that the death of someone loved is a shattering experience for an adolescent. As a result of this death, the teen's life is under reconstruction. Consider the significance of the loss and be gentle and compassionate in all of your helping efforts.

Grief is complex. It will vary from teen to teen. Caring grown-ups need to communicate to children that this feeling is not one to be ashamed of or hide. Instead, grief is a natural expression of love for the person who died.

For caring grown-ups, the challenge is clear: teenagers do not choose between grieving and not grieving; adults, on the other hand, do have a choice—to help or not to help adolescents cope with grief.

With love and understanding, grown-ups can support adolescents through this vulnerable time and help make the experience a valuable part of an adolescent's personal growth and development.

#### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:37AM (-08:00)

## **"I want my son back..."**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2010**

Hello Mark,

When everything I've tried failed, I started digging deeper into your program (about 85% complete but still reiterating). I found the section on ODD & CD, which I believe is present to some degree, especially the CD; probably mild to moderate substance abuse (weed, booze & grandmas prescriptions). I even heard he has been "dealing", but cannot find any proof, like a stash or cash, so I question (but do not reject the possibility of) him dealing. There are a lot of kids here on weekends, which seems normal.

He is popular at school, could do better and has issues with only one teacher that I know of. I met her, and well, I don't care for her either to be honest. We are always on alert, especially when anything is confiscated (old bottle of whiskey) from his room or the smell of smoke under a heavy blanket of cologne. He in no uncertain terms asked for the bottle(s) back. I looked him in the eye and said "And I want my son back". I was positive it would lead to another episode of a wall getting kicked clear through, so I called his cousin (who has semi-recovered from the same issues) and asked if he would come up for a surprise visit (distraction).

later and went to bed, no damage done. He will not speak to me, let alone listen to anything I have to say. Chores, ha. There's a better chance of Obama turning Republican and saying Bush was my mentor.

I also suspect (but have no proof) that the neighbor (who is about 38 years old) is somehow involved with more than a friendly ear. There is good reason to believe there's "something up", but I don't want to go there or insinuate anything without reasonable/absolute proof. I wouldn't want someone doing that to me. I need an approach.

Hanging in there...

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Prepare for your son to be angry if he suspects you have searched his room. As paranoia is a common side effect of many drugs popular among teens, your son may already be worrying that you are spying on him or will find out about his problem. It's likely that he may notice that someone has entered his room and moved his belongings, so be ready to deal with a possible confrontation about the search.

Wait until you know that he will be out of the house for an extended period of time. The best time to do so is probably when he will be at school, though if your son happens to skip school, a behavior that tends to accompany drug abuse, be aware of the possibility that he may unsuspectingly come home expecting you to be at work. If possible, wait to perform the search until you are certain he will be away from his room several uninterrupted hours, such as a work shift or a weekend vacation.

Think about hiding places built into the structure of your house. Your son is likely to be familiar with any special spots in his room where there are special compartments or openings, such as crawl spaces, attic doors, loose flooring or drop ceiling panels. These are places in your son's room where drugs or drug paraphernalia might be hidden because he may think no one else in the household knows about them.

Check everywhere in the room where drugs could be hidden, such as under the bed or mattress, behind bookcases and inside desk drawers. Look inside the battery compartments of any electronics in your son's room, such as the TV, remote controls and portable CD players. Also check any pieces of furniture with hollow areas that could provide a hiding place for small stashes of drugs.

Wait to confront your son about your suspicions if you do not find any evidence. Though it may be necessary to bring up the issue regardless of whether or not you find drugs in your son's room, breaking his trust can also be dangerous and can cause him to isolate himself even further from you. Discussing potential drug abuse is a topic that must be handled very delicately.

Next... the "conversation":

The major reason you have to have a conversation with your youngster about drugs and alcohol is because your kids need to be educated by you. They need to hear from their moms and dads that teen drug and alcohol use is not condoned in your family. They need to learn from their moms and dads about the consequences of drug and alcohol

use. Most importantly, they need to be held accountable for their actions with drugs and alcohol use.

What happens if you suspect that your teen is already using alcohol and drugs? What do you say to them? The conversation is the same: moms and dads need to tell their kids that drug and alcohol use by teens is not allowed in your family.

The issue won't go away until you do something. You will get to the point where you can't deny that the problem exists. You'll have a continuous nagging feeling in the pit of your stomach. You will simply have to acknowledge that your youngster has a problem — your youngster is using drugs and that won't get any better until you take action on your youngster's behalf. It is OK to ask for help. In fact, getting help may make it easier for you to have the conversation.

Sometimes the beginning of a conversation is harder than the middle — that dreaded conversation with your spouse or partner during which you acknowledge that you know your youngster has a problem with drugs or alcohol. That is a pretty profound conversation and is often laden with sadness, anger and regret. Denial plays a big part in that first conversation, as does finger-pointing. Neither reaction is helpful. The most important thing you can do is move on and figure out what you both can do to help your youngster.

This is a time for you and your spouse or partner to establish rules and consequences for your youngster if he or she uses drugs or alcohol. The rules should be simple: no drug or alcohol use by teens will be allowed in your family. The consequences should be straightforward and meaningful to the teen. Don't go to extremes in setting consequences — choose those that you are able to carry out.

Practice the conversation with each other ahead of time. You may have to have a couple of “practice runs.” These conversations are not easy but they are worthwhile. Talking it over with your spouse/partner beforehand will help you keep a level head and speak to the issue.

Tell yourself that you won't “lose it” with your youngster. Anger and hostility won't get you anywhere in this conversation. Stay as calm as possible. Remember, you are the parent and you are in charge. Be kind, simple, and direct in your statements to your youngster. Above all, remember to tell your youngster that you love him or her! The conversation will not be perfect — no conversation ever is. Know that you are doing the right thing for your youngster. That's what matters most!

Here are some suggested things to keep in mind when you talk to your youngster:

- It makes you FEEL worried and concerned about them when they do drugs.
- KNOW that you will have this discussion many, many times. Talking to your kid about drugs and alcohol is not a one-time event.
- Tell your son that you LOVE him, and you are worried that he might be using drugs or alcohol.
- You are there to LISTEN to them.
- You KNOW that drugs may seem like the thing to do, but doing drugs can have serious consequences.
- You tell him what you WILL do to help them.
- You WANT them to be a part of the solution.

## My Out-of-Control Teen

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:30PM (-08:00)

# Teens and Cults

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

*Her circle of friends has a leader who is a self proclaimed anarchist, is very well read and loves being the center of attention. Since my daughter met him, she has lost all her humour and individuality - almost like she's been brainwashed into a cult of sorts. She hangs on this guy's every word. Some of the other kid's parents even think he's really cool, but all I see is that he turned my daughter against us.*

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Adolescents are especially vulnerable to cult leaders because adolescence is a life transition, a time of many changes when suddenly the old rules don't work. The Journey from childhood to adulthood can be a bumpy ride as teens learn to get along with their families while gaining independence from them. At the same time adolescents try to avoid being pushed around by friends, they must work hard to fit in with the crowd. The major physical changes adolescents face certainly don't make life any easier.

According to psychologists who study cults, we are most vulnerable to the cult leader's message when we:

- are uncertain about our own beliefs and values
- aren't quite sure about how we should act
- feel like we need to find some answers about life, and we need to find them fast
- find ourselves in vague or confusing situations
- have our confidence shaken up by a crisis

It is no wonder that cult leaders often focus their efforts on adolescents. Cult leaders know that the teen years are a time of seeking direction, and they are more than willing to point the way -- right into a damaging cult. Some leaders make a special effort of contact potential teenage members during times of stress, such as final exam week or graduation, when they will be more vulnerable.

Although an adolescent without a job may not be able to bring money into the cult, they do have talents and a great deal of energy. Since young people have an easy time building rapport and gaining the trust of other young people, adolescents make good leaders. Dangerous cults can also put them to work building the cult community or raising funds. Some damaging cults seek out young members because they hope these recruits will marry other cult members and will later give their kids to the cult.

Why would teens become involved with a cult? There are a number of reasons that some teens would find them appealing.

As teens transition from childhood into adulthood, they generally question many aspects of their lives. Sometimes, they wonder why they should listen to their parents and teachers. Why should they follow seemingly outdated and irrelevant rules and

restrictions? After all, the world created by previous generations is far from ideal.

In addition all teens have aspects of their lives that are less than ideal. Perhaps their parents spend too much time at work and do not appear interested in their lives. Or, maybe, their parents want to be too intensely involved in their lives—trying to micro-manage small insignificant elements of daily living. That may become quite annoying. Possibly, the parents are not working and finances are very tight. Are there fights over money? Teens may find coping with these issues to be quite difficult.

Moreover, for many young people, the teen years are a time of intense uncertainty. While teens may criticize the world around them, they may be unclear where they belong and how they should prepare for the future. They appear to be quite certain what they don't want, but they have difficulty defining what they would like. Often, new untried ideas are welcome.

Further, there are teens who have yet to connect with their peers. Somehow, they do not fit in with any of the groups at their school. They are not sufficiently athletic to be part of those groups; they are not smart enough to be accepted by the academic achievers; and they lack the social skills to be welcomed by the most social. Not surprisingly, these teens feel like outcasts—as if they don't really belong. They are desperate to be part of something, and they lack the experience to comprehend what membership in a cult entails.

People of any age may experience personal crises. But teens tend to feel them more intensely. At the separation or divorce of parents, the break-up of an intense relationship, pressure over academic achievement and leaving for college may create internal turmoil. In fact, cult recruits are known to recruit on college campuses. Lonely students away from home for the first time may become involved with a cult without really realizing what is happening. That may be why people in their late teens and early 20s appear to be the most vulnerable.

Still, many teens from seemingly functional, financially secure families are drawn to cults. On occasion, there is no obvious reason for the attraction. Or maybe the families are not as solid and the relationships as nurturing as they may outwardly appear to be. There has also been a decline in the influence of families and religious institutions in today's world.

There are several different types of cults. Probably the best-known ones are premised on some form of radical religion. The beliefs go far beyond any mainstream thoughts or theories. Political cults also receive a good deal of media attention. But there are also self-help or educational cults that use marginal techniques and economic cults that promise get-rich-quick schemes.

All cults use mind control techniques to attract prospective recruits and to keep their present recruits. There may be systematic brainwashing or programming. Cult recruits are often isolated from their family and friends. Very little contact is permitted. Past relationships may be criticized or demonized. Only relationships with current cult recruits are allowed. Books and newspapers may be carefully censored. Sleep deprivation combined with sensory overload are not uncommon, as are drugs and physical abuse. Cults usually require the handing over of any monetary assets or property. The leader will decide where cult recruits work. All earnings go directly to the cult.

When prospective cult recruits enter the cult, recruiters appear to be intensely interested in their needs, wants and feelings. Little personal space is allowed. Teens who previously believed that their parents and teachers didn't care what they thought or said now think that someone is truly interested; another person is really listening. These techniques may be combined with long periods of meditating and/or chanting. No deviation from the routine is permitted; there is no questioning of the leader and his philosophy. Outsiders who find serious shortcomings with the cult's beliefs are ridiculed.

In time, cult recruits develop a psychological dependence on the group leader, and it is the leader who directs all aspects of their lives. Cult recruits often lose their ability to make their own decision. As a result, the leaders retain an enormous amount of power over their followers, and they may use them for their own self-centered purposes such as making money or obtaining sex.

No matter how difficult a teen feels his or her life has become, avoid joining a cult. Sometimes a cult may masquerade as just another campus organization when, in fact, it is a cult. If one has any doubt, check with the college administration. Cults are psychologically and spiritually harmful and should be avoided. Historically, a number of cults have ended with mass suicides.

What are some of the ways to protect teens, their family recruits and friends against cults? Teens should learn more about them and how they recruit new recruits. Recruitment may be very subtle. In addition to schools, cult recruiters may be found in malls, stores, on the street, at work and over the Internet. They are everywhere.

If a teen has concerns about any group, then he or she should not ignore instinct. A teen could speak to a trusted adult, member of the clergy, teacher or school counselor if there are concerns.

#### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:57AM (-08:00)

## **Interventions For Your ADHD Teen: PowerPoint Presentation**

**Monday, March 01, 2010**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:09AM (-08:00)

## **What To Do When Your Child/Teen Physically Attacks You**

**Tuesday, March 09, 2010**



Aggression or violence towards moms and dads (or other family members) by their kids or adolescents is more common than most people believe and it is something that is usually not talked about. It can involve abusive language, frightening, threatening or physically hurting a parent (pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing things), hurting pets, damaging furniture and property, or threatening with knives or weapons. Whether it is a one-off incident or ongoing, it must be dealt with.



Kids may be aggressive towards moms and dads for a number of reasons. None of the following reasons excuse violent or aggressive behavior, but they may help moms and dads understand why some kids, especially adolescents do it:

- Drugs or alcohol, the loss of a job or a broken relationship can all be triggers that lead to violence.
- They do not know of any other way to solve problems or get what they want (lashing out at someone or something is all they know).
- They have grown up in a household where they have seen adults (sometimes moms and dads or partners) being angry, and using violence towards them or others (this behavior is seen as normal in their eyes).
- They have not learned how to control or manage their feelings, especially angry ones and so just act out without using any self discipline.
- They have not learned to value or respect other people or their property.
- They may be going through a really difficult time and cannot cope with the stresses in their own lives.
- They may have a disability and have not been able to learn other ways of behaving.
- They may have an acute mental illness and be very frightened.
- They may have used drugs that can trigger an acute psychosis and violent behavior.
- They see the parent as weak and powerless (it is often the mother), or they think that this is how women can be treated.

Most moms and dads whose kids attack them in this way can feel very scared, very powerless, lonely, sometimes embarrassed, ashamed and guilty. They feel they have lost control in the home.

- Although taking a tough stand can be difficult it is very important to do. When a teenager is violent toward a parent, no matter how much she might excuse her behavior ("it was really mum's fault, she pushed me to it") she can never feel all right about it. If she is never made to stop, she will probably repeat the same pattern in other relationships or in the work place. It will continue to cause problems in her life and can even lead to problems with the law unless she is stopped and can learn other ways to deal with her anger.

- Be prepared to make some tough decisions, even though your confidence feels shattered.

- Decide on your 'bottom line'. You need to be very clear and carry out what you have said will happen when he has overstepped this line. This may mean your teenager leaves your home either by agreement or by using the police and/or a restraining order. You may find this very hard to do. Get support from someone who understands.

- If the behavior is out of character for your teenager and has started only recently, think about what else may have happened or changed lately. For example, has anyone new had contact with your family recently or have there been changes in the family or with his friends? Has anything happened in these relationships? Is your teenager depressed? See the topic 'Teenage depression'. Has your teenager been taking drugs?

- If your other kids are being harmed in any way by your teenager, you must do something to protect them.



- Look at the situation from your teenager's point of view, no matter how unreasonable it seems. Think about how your behavior (from his point of view) might be contributing to the situation (even if you don't think it could be).
- Notice what your teenager does well and talk to him about it. Adolescents especially do not need reminders of their failures.
- Remember that whatever has happened in your relationship with your teenager, there is no excuse for violence.
- Spend some time supporting what he likes doing if he will let you, eg watching him play sport or listening to his music.
- Taking a tough stand helps to force your youngster to face his violence - he then has the chance to learn other ways of dealing with anger.
- Think about what happens as a fight brews. What are the warning signs? When these signs are present, make sure you separate from each other (you may have to leave the house). If so, take your younger kids with you so they don't become the victims of violence. Talk about concerns only when you are both calm.
- Think about your favorite image of your teenager. Do you still think of her as she was when she was little? You may need to come to grips with the fact that she is no longer a youngster.
- Think what the fights are most often about. Work out what things you are not prepared to move your position on, what ones you are prepared to give way on and what you can leave for your teenager to sort out.
- You need to take some control in your home. You may not be able to change or stop your teenager's behavior, but you can take a stand for what you are prepared to put up with in your home. This is important especially if there are younger kids who may feel frightened and need your help to feel safe.

Violence towards moms and dads or other family members is unacceptable and is recognized by the police as a crime. It is very difficult to make the decision to call the police and possibly have your youngster charged, but you need to keep yourself and others safe.

- You are likely to feel guilt, anger, sadness and fear.
- You may feel that you are betraying your youngster and that this will put his or her future at risk.

Calling the police can help to calm the situation, support you to regain control and begin to rebuild a respectful relationship with your youngster.

What will happen? The police can help to calm an explosive situation or protect other family members. They will give advice and ask what action you want taken, if any.

What action can they take? If you would like the police to take further action the young

person will be taken for a formal interview at the nearest police station. The police can deal with the young person by:

- Arranging a family conference
- Issuing a formal caution
- Issuing an informal caution
- Proceeding through the Youth Court

If the offense is serious the young person can be arrested and taken into custody.

- Kids under 10 years cannot be charged, but police can still be called for assistance and advice.
- If the young person is between 10 and 18 years old, cases are handled within the Juvenile Justice system. The court will decide upon appropriate action if it determined that a crime has occurred. However this information will not be released when a criminal history is requested (eg by an employer).
- If you do not want to take action, police keep the matter on file and it can be followed up at a later time.
- Young people over 18 are considered adults and would be dealt with through the Magistrates Court. If convicted this would be recorded as part of a criminal history and will be released if a criminal history is requested. (An employer can only get a criminal history record if the person agrees to this, but not agreeing may affect employment opportunities).

Regardless of the future impact on your youngster it is important to take action to ensure the safety of yourself and other family members - you all have the right to feel safe.

Summary—

- Call the police if you or others in your family are at risk.
- Deal with this problem... it won't go away.
- Decide on your bottom line, make it known in advance, mean it and carry it out.
- Find out what works for other people.
- Look after your self esteem... you may feel you have lost it altogether or it needs repairing.
- Speak to someone who understands this sort of behavior and who can support you.
- Take some control... for the sake of yourself, your teenager and your other kids.
- You can love your youngster but you do not have to put up with all his behavior.

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:47AM (-08:00)

## **You and I share common beliefs regarding the importance of informed...**

**Wednesday, March 10, 2010**

Thanks, Mark,

I am not a parent in the true sense of the word. I work with aboriginal children at a school run by the Bigstone Cree Nation in northern Alberta, Canada. One of my responsibilities

is to provide support for parents and teachers who have children/students posing challenging behaviors. Therefore, the more knowledge I can gain and the more strategies we have available for parents and teachers, the better able we are to interact in helpful ways with our students. From watching the introductory video and reading through the preliminary pages, I can already see that you and I share common beliefs regarding the importance of informed and strategic parenting skills and it is very important that these carry over to teacher strategies at school. We're doing fairly well with our kids at school but need to put a lot more energy into our work with parents. By the way, except for me, the grade 6 and grade 7 teachers, all the rest of the staff are Cree. Huge strides are happening at our school and I am privileged to be a part of it.

Thank you for providing these materials. I know already that they will be very valuable in guiding my work with our families.

Best regards,

C.R.

### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:45AM (-08:00)

## **"My Out of Control Teen" - Review**

**Wednesday, March 10, 2010**

### **Discover Secrets of Mark Hutten About Regaining Control Over Strong Willed, Out of Control Teenagers**

Mark Hutten has secrets about regaining control over strong-willed, out of control teens. And good thing, he has laid down all of his secrets in his My Out Of Control Teen ebook.

His secrets are basically just about regaining control over strong-willed, out of control teens. His secrets are about the techniques and approaches to use with strong-willed, out of control teens. The techniques and approaches are not like the conventional techniques and approaches that you most likely know and often do not work.

Strong-willed, out of control teens often lose their temper instantly, argue with adults, refuse to comply with rules and requests, blame others for own mistakes, and like to annoy others. And typically, they are resentful, vindictive and spiteful. It's really hard to deal with them. But good thing, because of the techniques and approaches Mark Hutten has in mind, there's a chance to regain control over these strong-willed, out of control teens and eventually turn them to better, controllable teens.

If you are a parent of a strong-willed, out of control teen, you must have something like a guide around. You must have something like My Out Of Control Teen ebook. You need something like a guide that will help you change your strong-willed, out of control teen.

Check out the ebook online today. It's at an affordable price. And the nicest thing, it comes with 100% "better-than-risk-free" money back guarantee. If ever you feel unsatisfied with it, you can have your money back but can still keep it for good. Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:57AM (-08:00)

## Older Brother Picks On Younger Sibs

Thursday, March 11, 2010

We have a 15 1/2 year old son who is defiant... possibly even ODD, although we've not gotten any diagnosis (even though we have seen two different therapists). Just to let you know, he is a straight "A" 10th grade student, in all Honors and AP Classes, who this school year alone, has received 3 "Student of the Month" Awards. We have been implementing your program and I definitely see some very positive results. There is one area where I am really not sure how to respond/act when he does this particular behavior: he will purposely touch/or say something to annoy/bother one of his three brothers, and then he will deny that he just did it, even when I am right there and actually see it. What should I do or say when this happens? He is very bothered when I address this and does not like to have to answer any questions regarding this issue. Do I impose a consequence for this behavior? How do I get him to admit what he has actually done? Because it really bothers his brothers, I cannot just ignore this behavior, it really affects his brothers negatively. I also am wondering, can a child like this actually turn on and off these behaviors at will?? When we did see the therapists, he absolutely refused to talk or admit that anything was wrong. The very few times he did say something, he was very rude and even hateful toward the therapists. If you could give me some advice on the few things I mentioned, I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

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Moms and dads have been taught that they must be impartial when sibling-conflict issues arise... but this can be extremely difficult. It's inevitable that moms and dads will feel differently about kids who have different personalities with differing needs, dispositions, and place in the family.

While it may be common for brothers and sisters to fight, it's certainly not pleasant for anyone in the house. And a family can only tolerate a certain amount of conflict. So what should you do when the fighting starts?

Ever since we decided that sibling rivalry is normal, we've had a terrible time figuring out what to do about it. However, here are some do's and don'ts that may be helpful in dampening down sibling rivalry within a family:

- Don't dismiss or suppress your kid's resentment or angry feelings. Contrary to what many people think, anger is not something we should try to avoid at all costs. It's an entirely normal part of being human, and it's certainly normal for siblings to get furious with one another. They need the adults in their lives to assure them moms and dads get angry too, but have learned control - and the angry feelings do not give license to behave in cruel and dangerous ways. This is the time to sit down, acknowledge the anger ("I know you hate David right now but you cannot hit him with a stick") and talk it through.
- Don't make comparisons. ("I don't understand it. When Johnny was her age, he could already tie his shoes.") Each youngster feels he is unique and rightly so-he is unique, and he resents being evaluated only in relation to someone else. Instead of comparison, each youngster in the family should be given his own goals and levels of expectation that relate only to him.

- Don't put too much focus on figuring out which youngster is to blame. It takes two to

fight — anyone who is involved is partly responsible.

- Even then, encourage them to resolve the crisis themselves. If you do step in, try to resolve problems with your kids, not for them.
- If you're concerned by the language used or name-calling, it's appropriate to "coach" kids through what they're feeling by using appropriate words. This is different from intervening or stepping in and separating the kids.
- Separate kids until they're calm. Sometimes it's best just to give them space for a little while and not immediately rehash the conflict. Otherwise, the fight can escalate again. If you want to make this a learning experience, wait until the emotions have died down.
- Try to avoid situations that promote guilt in siblings. First we must teach kids that feelings and actions are not synonymous. It may be normal, for example, to want to hit the baby on the head, but moms and dads must stop a youngster from doing it. The guilt that follows doing something mean is a lot worse than the guilt of merely feeling mean. So parental intervention must be quick and decisive.
- Try to set up a "win-win" situation so that each youngster gains something. When they both want the same toy, perhaps there's a game they could play together instead.
- When possible, let brothers and sisters settle their own differences. Sounds good but it can be terribly unfair in practice. Moms and dads have to judge when it is time to step in and mediate, especially in a contest of un-equals in terms of strength and eloquence (no fair hitting below the belt literally or figuratively). Some long-lasting grudges among grown siblings have resulted when their minority rights were not protected.
- Whenever possible, don't get involved. Step in only if there's a danger of physical harm. If you always intervene, you risk creating other problems. The kids may start expecting your help and wait for you to come to the rescue rather than learning to work out the problems on their own. There's also the risk that you — inadvertently — make it appear to one youngster that another is always being "protected," which could foster even more resentment. By the same token, rescued kids may feel that they can get away with more because they're always being "saved" by a parent.

Remember, as kids cope with disputes, they also learn important skills that will serve them for life — like how to value another person's perspective, how to compromise and negotiate, and how to control aggressive impulses.

#### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:16AM (-08:00)

## **Daughter "Waging War" Against Mother's Fiancé**

**Thursday, March 11, 2010**

I believe my daughter (who will turn 15 on March 20th) has ODD. Defiant is a word that has always described her, however, she and I have always dealt well together - until this past year. My fiancé moved in last March, and in May, she went to school drunk. So drunk in fact, that she was taken away by the police to the children's hospital for evaluation. She has continued to drink on weekends and every month or so, something

occurs. It might be her being brought home by the police, or us calling the police to help as she is violent and acts possessed when she drinks. She did spend a week in the mental unit at the children's hospital. She is waging a war to get my fiancé to move out and the two of them are engaging in a war. He employs some pretty consistent methods, and we usually agree, but she has wrecked and stolen some of his things, called him everything under the sun, written notes and put them all over the house telling him to move out...you name it. Now he has no trust for her, nor do they like each other at all. They do not speak a word to each other, be in the same room or car with each other.

I feel that my choice is a very hard one. She is the only thing we really have any conflict over, but I am willing and prepared to say goodbye to what could have been my future with him if it will help her. The thing is, I don't want her to shove him out of the house and know she's got that power. I think he feels helpless and powerless and it makes him angrier.

I am trying to follow your eBook, and some of these things I was already doing, but we have a very major issue not addressed that I really don't know what to do about.

Any advice would be greatly appreciated.

J.

~~~~~

Hi J,

This is a tough one. From your daughter's point of view, she has everything to lose if you have a boyfriend. She's been the center of your life and your attention for her whole little life. Why would she want that to change? She's not mature enough to be sympathetic to your needs. She's terrified that if you love someone else, there will be less love for her.

My best advice to you is to go very slow. Unless you have been seeing this man for at least 6 months and are pretty sure the relationship is going somewhere, it's not wise to push her into having a relationship with him. It's confusing to children to have people move in and out of their lives. It also frightens many children. They wonder, "If you can fall in and out of love with men, can you fall out of love with me?"

There are really two sides to this dilemma. One argument would be as follows:

1. If it comes down to picking between a relationship with your daughter or the boyfriend, lose the boyfriend. Your #1 concern is your child. You can wait to date for another 3 years. You do not need a boyfriend, you need to be a mother to your child.

Another equally valid argument would be:

2. She needs to learn that you, her mother, also have a life – and a need for relationship with a significant other. Don't cave in to her manipulation or send the message that "if you just act-up enough, you can control what mom says and does."

Since she is now 15, I think you can have a frank discussion with her about your feelings about your fiancé. You can go on to tell her that your current partner and you are in love and plan to be married someday. And because you are in love, you will continue to see

one another. Ask her if she thinks she's ready to get over it and accept your fiancé. If she indicates she can't get over it or accept him, then tell her you will be setting up an appointment for a therapist. If she says she's not going, tell her she will be going. When it's time for the appointment, you just tell her she is going - period. She may say she's not going to talk at the therapist's office. But that's okay. That's the therapist's problem. (Quite honestly, it sounds like she needs some counseling anyway, maybe in the form of drug and alcohol treatment.)

Mark

### **My Out-of-Control Daughter**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 04:53PM (-08:00)

## **What To Do When Teens Won't Get Up For School**

**Friday, March 12, 2010**

Mark,

I have been following the programme as best I can for the last 5 weeks and have seen great success. My relationship with my son Thomas has improved immeasurably and that is such an incredible blessing. That improvement has also allowed us to make great progress with the problem areas which we are facing –

- Disrespect and anger
- Hanging out with the wrong group
- Drug abuse
- Failing academically

I feel that the progress is quite fragile and I'm probably worried that it will go backwards. I don't feel as strong as I did at the start and I don't know how to get this confidence back. I feel him backing off my authority and not respecting me again. I think he is trying to assert his independence more, maybe because we have made so much progress. I'm just a bit confused. I think I need to focus on finding more things to praise and I have maybe dropped the ball in this area. He has only got until June to finish school and then he is planning to join the army, but that might take until Jan next year. This new focus is good because for the first time ever he is interested in doing something constructive and he is excited and happy about it.

He is going to school but it is such a struggle to get him up and out in the morning. We have not given him a key of the house because of trust issues and therefore he needs to be out before we leave for work. He continually gets up late and it seems he is getting later and later. Going to school creates structure for him and I am worried that he will drop out and we will be left with a 16 year old with no structure in his day. How do I get him up in the morning when I don't think he cares whether he's attending school or not? I'm thinking I should be taking away something that he wants until he sorts out the mornings, but I don't know what. And maybe I'm scared of going through an angry confrontation.

The improvements are fantastic and I just want them to continue.

L.

~~~~~  
Hi L.,

Stop taking responsibility for getting your son out of bed on time. If you repeatedly bang on your son's door to get him up, or you drag him out of bed, you are working harder to wake up your son than he is. You are substituting your extra energy and effort for your son's.

If you think about it, why should your son get up on his own when you are willing to do it for him? If he knows he doesn't really have to get up until mom threatens to bring the ice water, why should he get up at the first ring of the alarm? Ten more minutes is ten more minutes, right?

In order to get your son to adhere to the morning routine, you need to give him the responsibility for getting up – as well as a consequence for not getting up (re: consequences - refer to session #3 in the online version of the eBook under the section entitled "When You Want Something From Your Kid").

Sit down with your son and have a discussion about getting up in the morning. You might say for example, "You and I have a hard time in the morning. I am no longer going to be responsible for getting you up on time. I will give you one wake up call, and then it's up to you. If you miss the bus, I will not drive you to school. You will need to either find another way to get there, or you will need to call your teachers to get your assignments." (You'll need to customize the consequences and expectations to your own family situation. If you do have to drive them to school because they overslept, maybe the consequence is that they have to do an hour of chores to make up for the time you lost.)

The important thing to realize is that as long as you take responsibility for getting your son out of bed, he will let you do it. It may take a few days for him to get the hint, but once you stop working so hard, he will realize he has to change his behavior, or face certain consequences.

A natural consequence for oversleeping and being late to school is making up any schoolwork that was missed. You might also check with your school to see what the policy is for repeated tardiness or missed classes. Don't protect your son from these consequences by making sure he makes that bus on time. In order to create less dramatic mornings, you have to let your son experience the consequences of not getting himself up and out the door.

Remember, teenagers are fighting against a physiological drive that tells them to sleep later than many school start times. In order to change their behavior, they need a plan, not just wishful thinking. If your son has a hard time getting up, have him come up with a list of things he will do to help himself get out of bed on time. Changing to an earlier bedtime may help. Putting the alarm clock across the room, instead of next to the bed, may also help. Have your son pack his school lunch, pick out their clothes and organize his backpack the night before so that he doesn't have to do it in the morning. Remember to put the responsibility for getting up in the morning on him.



Mark

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:25AM (-08:00)

## **What steps should a parent take when her adolescent admits to smoki...**

**Tuesday, March 16, 2010**

### **Question**

What steps should a parent take when her adolescent admits to smoking pot and openly states he will continue to do so because he sees nothing wrong with it?

### **Answer**

On the positive side, despite the challenging nature of an adolescent saying he's going to do what he wants and you can't stop him, is the fact that he was open about what he is doing. That shows a level of trust and honesty that is important to recognize and communicate. "I don't like what you are saying but I am glad you are being honest with me." Despite the alleged defiance, it does provide an opportunity for discussion. (I say "alleged" because often when adolescents are openly defiant about substance use or sexual activity, they are really asking for some limits to be imposed.)

The first stage of responding by the parent involves trying to understand what your adolescent is actually experiencing and to try to engage him in a helpful dialogue. Hold back on your admonitions and threats. Instead, approach your youngster as the expert and ask for a greater understanding. For example, what is it like when you get high? Is it easy to get pot? How much does it cost these days? What different types of pot are out there now? I understand that the current weed is much stronger than what was around in my day. Is that true? Why do you like to get high... essentially, what are the benefits to you?

This last question opens up some important areas to explore. For some adolescents, it is purely a social activity, not unlike having a few beers with their friends when they are hanging out on a weekend night. (I'm not suggesting that's acceptable either; but it identifies it as the less risky recreational use.) It's also interesting who he is smoking with. Is it his usual friends (you may be surprised to learn that some of your adolescent's friends that you like and thought were positive influences use as much or more)? For him to answer that question you have to pledge confidentiality.

Sometimes it turns out that the kids he gets high with are not his regular buddies and it's important to know if he's beginning to be influenced by some other adolescents that may be more of a fringe group who don't appear to share the values you and your adolescent have discussed as important. If there is such a shift taking place that in itself becomes an important topic for exploration. Why is he distancing himself from his usual social group? Are they "not cool", perhaps because they don't get high? Or, has his old group moved beyond him in some way?

How much of the pot use is based on filling some personal need? One of the most

frequent driving forces behind abuse of pot is when it is a form of self-medication. This is when adolescents who have undiagnosed Attention Deficit Disorder use pot to calm their jitters or the depressed youngster uses pot to shut off negative thoughts and feelings. This group of users is more likely to smoke alone as well as with peers and that's an important distinction to make. If there is an underlying problem driving the use of pot, it is important to identify that and encourage getting help for that problem.

One good question to pose is "How would you know when it's not a good thing to do?" This is easily asked when your adolescent is quick to point out he is not a druggie like so and so who's always high. This part of the discussion will touch on how often he actually uses pot and under what circumstances. Most important it clarifies his ability to acknowledge that there are risks of abuse and can he tell the difference? For example is he aware that chronic users, defined as those who smoke daily for a month or more, typically will become depressed if they stop using?

Also is he aware of the ways in which pot negatively impacts users? For example, because it tends to create a sense of apathy (the "What, me worry?" syndrome), the negative effects of pot are often subtle and easy to miss. Research has shown that adolescents who use pot on some degree of a regular basis usually get their driver's license significantly later than non-users. This reflects the tendency to put things off and not care as much about things that are usually important. The adolescent that remains focused on his schoolwork, after school activities, and other interests, is clearly at less risk than the adolescent that starts letting things slip.

Please note that all of these points of discussion are not meant to be covered in a single conversation! Most adolescents would find that intolerable. Raise a few of the initial points, say you want to think about it, and would like to talk further. As always, part of the challenge is finding those occasional moments when your adolescent is actually in the mood to talk. Typically driving somewhere together is one of the best times, which also implies that often it is better to have only one parent involved in the conversation so it doesn't feel like a 2-on-1.

But once moms and dads have a better understanding of the reasons for use and the patterns of use, you should both express your displeasure in the following ways. First, it is illegal. Your adolescent needs to be reminded that he can be arrested and – yes – while not much happens to first time offenders, it's still no fun to end up on probation and to have to do community service. In addition, employers now routinely drug test all applicants. Since traces of pot remain in the system for about a month and it is not as easy to hide as commonly thought, your adolescent may be very disappointed when he gets fired from his local, part-time job because of a positive drug screen. Moreover, as moms and dads, you do not want an illegal substance in your home nor do you want your adolescent or his friends smoking in your home. That needs to be a very clear, zero-tolerance rule.

It is important for you to express your disapproval of his use of pot in a calm, firm manner, without hysterics or unreasonable threats. You do not approve of this and will not condone it. You understand you cannot control his behavior, that if he chooses to smoke, you can't really stop him (more about exceptions to this later), but you will set some firm rules about this. For example, if you suspect he is breaking the rule by bringing pot into the house, he is to understand that his right to privacy in his room will be suspended, that periodic room searches will take place, and backpacks may also be searched.

Another issue is driving. If your adolescent has his license, the same rule about drinking and not driving apply to smoking pot and driving. The research is very clear that it delays reaction times and, therefore, increases the risk of accidents.

While there is potential for physiological addiction, and, of course, the major concern of moms and dads is that using pot will lead to using more serious drugs, the reality is that the vast majority of pot users do not go on to use heavy drugs. However, there is the significant potential for psychological addiction, based on the need to reduce stress and /or the need to fit in with peers. The key is looking for signs that use is turning into abuse; that your youngster's behavior or personality is changing in negative ways. If you begin to believe that your adolescent is developing a serious addiction, then you can take much stronger steps, including involving the police, requiring routine drug testing, and insisting upon individual and family counseling with a specialist in substance abuse.

Fortunately, most of the time, this is not the case. What you want to do in this situation is open up and maintain a line of communication that is based on accurate information about the risks involved and encourage your adolescent to make good decisions. In the end, it is that psychological capacity to be self-aware and make good decisions that is really much more important than whether or not your adolescent smokes pot for a period of his life.

#### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:22PM (-07:00)

## **Parents' Troubleshooting Guide**

**Thursday, April 01, 2010**

Is your adolescent rebelling, defying your curfew, or hanging out with questionable kids? Here's how to nip behavior problems in the bud.

To be fair, no one has ever pretended that parenting an adolescent was going to be easy. Still, until your own kids reach that stage, it's tempting to believe your family will be immune to teen behavior problems. No, you tell yourself, your adolescent will never talk back, stay out too late or pierce her eyebrow. Dream on.

Adolescents are basically hard-wired to butt heads with their moms and dads. Adolescence is a time of rapid change for kids both physically and cognitively. It's the task of the adolescent to fire their moms and dads and then re-hire them years later, but as consultants rather than managers.

But that doesn't mean you have to take it lying down. With the right approach, you can troubleshoot the following teen behavior problems in a relatively civilized fashion.

#### **Behavior Problem 1:**

**Your Teen Seems To Hate You—**

One minute your sweet youngster is begging you to come on the class trip or to lie down with her while she falls asleep. Then, seemingly overnight, she starts treating you like dirt, discounting everything you say and snickering at your suggestions. If you look closely, you'll see that you've been through this before, when she was a toddler -- only instead of

shouting "no!" like a two-year-old would, an adolescent simply rolls her eyes in disgust.

It's so hard for moms and dads when this happens. But part of adolescence is about separating and individuating, and many kids need to reject their moms and dads in order to find their own identities. Teens focus on their friends more than on their families, which is normal too.

Your Solution—

Sometimes moms and dads feel so hurt by their teens' treatment that they respond by returning the rejection -- which is a mistake. Adolescents know that they still need their moms and dads even if they can't admit it. The roller-coaster they put you on is also the one they're feeling internally." As the parent, you need to stay calm and try to weather this teenage rebellion phase, which usually passes by the time a youngster is 16 or 17.

But no one's saying your teen should be allowed to be truly nasty or to curse at you; when this happens, you have to enforce basic behavior standards. One solution is the good, old-fashioned approach of: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." By letting your adolescent know that you're here for him no matter what, you make it more likely that he'll let down his guard and confide in you once in a while, which is a rare treat.

### **Behavior Problem 2:**

Communication Devices Rule Their Lives—

It's ironic that teenage forms of communication like IM-ing, text-messaging and talking on cell phones make them less communicative, at least with the people they live with. In today's world, though, forbidding all use of electronic devices is not only unrealistic, but unkind. Being networked with their friends is critical to most teens.

Your Solution—

Look at the big picture. If your youngster is functioning well in school, doing his chores at home and not completely retreating from family life, it's probably best to "lay off." It's also OK to set reasonable limits, such as no "texting" or cell phone calls during dinner. Some moms and dads prefer not to let teens have computers in their rooms, since it makes it harder to supervise computer usage, and this is perfectly reasonable. Many experts also suggest establishing a rule that the computer has to be off at least one hour before bedtime, as a way to ensure that teens get more sleep.

One good way to limit how many minutes your teen spends talking on his cell and texting: Require him to pay his own cell phone bills. And do your best to monitor what your youngster does when he's online, particularly if he or she is using networking sites like MySpace and Facebook. You still own the home and computer -- so check into parental Internet controls and software to monitor use of any questionable web sites.

### **Behavior Problem 3:**

Staying Out Too Late—

It's 10:30 p.m. and you told your daughter to be home by 10 p.m. Why does she ignore

your curfew again and again?

Part of what teens do is test limits. But the fact is that they actually want limits, so moms and dads need to keep setting them.

Your Solution—

Do some research before insisting that your youngster respect your curfew because it's possible that yours is unreasonable. Call a few of your kids' friends' moms and dads and find out when they expect their kids home. Goldman suggests giving kids a 10-minute grace period, and if they defy that, to set consequences -- such as no going out at night for a week.

If it seems like your youngster is staying out late because she's up to no good, or doesn't feel happy at home, then you need to talk with her and figure out what might be going on. However, if your curfew is in line with what's typical in your teen's crowd, then it's time to set consequences and then enforce them if your teen continues to break your rules. When you make a rule, you have to mean it. You can't bluff adolescents -- they will always call you on it.

#### **Behavior Problem 4:**

Hanging Out with Kids You Don't Like—

You wince every time your son traipses through the door with his greasy-haired, noisy buddies. Should you suck it up, or say something?

Your Solution—

Kids can wear weird clothes, pierce their lips, act rudely and still be decent kids. Moms and dads should hold off on criticizing something as superficial as fashion in their kids' friends. Adolescents are so attached to their friends that it's like criticizing them directly.

On the other hand, if you know that your youngster has taken up with a group of troubled teens who skip school and do drugs, a talk is in order. Without putting him on the defensive, tell your youngster you're concerned about who he's hanging out with and that you're worried he's doing drugs. While you can't forbid your youngster to hang around with certain kids, you can intervene and try to nip dangerous behaviors in the bud. Don't be afraid to ask for professional help about hanging out with a crowd engaged in negative behavior. Counseling or family therapy can help.

#### **Behavior Problem 5:**

Everything's a Drama—

Every little thing seems to set your daughter off lately, and the more you try to help, the more she sobs or shouts or slams the door.

Part of being an adolescent is feeling things intensely, so what may seem like no big deal to you is hugely important to her.

Your Solution—

Moms and dads tend to trivialize the importance of things in adolescents' lives. What happens is that kids feel misunderstood, and eventually they will stop telling you anything. Right now it is the most important thing in the world that her best friend is flirting with her boyfriend, and you need to take it seriously.

Don't offer advice, disparage her friends or try to minimize it by saying that one day she'll see how silly high school romances are. Just listen and sympathize. And put yourself in her position -- because, after all, you were once there yourself.

### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:43AM (-07:00)

## **Why do some adolescents hate Math and Science?**

**Friday, April 02, 2010**

It is a known fact that, as kids grow into teens, they gradually lose their natural curiosity and inquisitiveness. Their diminishing love for the unknown coupled with the much harder high school curriculum, can then be attributed to their subsequent hatred for Mathematics and Science.

Although most of these adolescents haven't realized it yet, this is a very alarming situation. It is important for these young people to understand that Mathematics and Science form the very foundation which holds this world together. Therefore it is imperative to point out what the main reasons are behind the continued dislike for these analytical subjects and then provide solutions for such:

(1) They are boring subjects.

Mathematics and Science, with all its formulas and theories can easily alienate young minds. It's wrong to believe that Mathematics and Science don't promote creativity/stimulate the imagination as much as the other subjects like English and Social Studies. In fact, that's the core of these subjects, Science more than anything: Imagination. They are only bounded by what the teenager can fathom.

It is therefore necessary for educators to make these subjects less boring for the teens. If a teacher is armed only with bland Powerpoint presentations and yawn-inducing lectures, there's no surprise that teens will hate the teacher as well as the subject. There should always be room for "fun" even if the subject matter isn't fun in the first place. Most twenty-somethings would usually remember the educators who make a mark on their lives. It would be really nice to hear about successful men and women who can associate their success with their high school Mathematics/Science teacher.

(2) They are attributed with nerds/geeks.

This crude teenage social system is pretty much still common even at this day and age. Look at it this way, the cooler kids with their cars and their pool parties will never dare to be seen with the Science nerds and the Mathematics geeks. Such primitive conduct is simply atrocious!

As an old bumper sticker said: "Mathematics is radical!"

The false belief of being un-cool when you excel in such subjects as Mathematics and Science needs to stop right now. Sure, they may be looked upon as "pariahs" in the teenage society, but these nerds and geeks are the future multi-millionaires of their generation. Moms and dads as well as educators should promote such advocacy – that teens should stand up with their head held high and be proud if they love Mathematics and Science. Wouldn't it be like Millhouse's Utopia if there were Jocks who are also Calculus geniuses or Homecoming Queens who dabble in Organic Chemistry? Or maybe this geek is just stuck in a daydream.

(3) They are difficult to understand.

The thing that separates Mathematics and Science from the rest of the subjects in school is their difficulty. The inability to master the equation for a certain chemical reaction or the formula for a multi-step problem can take a toll on even the brightest minds. You can seldom spot a teenager who flunks English or History, except if they find the tedious task of submitting long essays/reports.

One can easily combat this difficulty with constant practice. It may sound like an old record, but just like sports, Mathematics and Science is no different: Practice indeed makes perfect. When a hard Mathematics problem is encountered, the teenager should always see to it that he/she can understand the theory behind the problem and then solve it step-by-step. Provided that the "boring factor" is already eliminated, then the teenager, whether he is not equipped with the analytic brain required for such subjects, can tough it out just through practice, sheer determination, practice, drive to succeed, and even more practice.

I leave you with a quote by John Louis von Neumann: "If people do not believe that Mathematics is simple, it is only because they do not realize how complicated life is."

(4) Some of these subjects can't be used in day-to-day life.

This statement is completely and utterly FALSE! Even the most minor area of the Sciences is used in everyday living.

As stated earlier, Mathematics and Science comprises the very foundation the world in general is standing on. Business, social structures, even politics has their roots on Mathematics and Science. To completely disregard its importance as a core subject taught in schools is a big no-no. Teens, as young as they are, should come to the realization that they will need these subjects as they go on with their lives, whether they apply to university or not. To understand such concept, one must again rely on the creativity and passion of the teenager's Mathematics/Science teacher. If they can make their teens understand, then such false statements will never enter their heads.

As a conclusion allow me to say that Mathematics and Science should never be looked upon as subjects that make your life difficult. For what it's worth, they're the ones who will make your life simpler and easier.

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:57AM (-07:00)

# Son's Phone Messages Reveal Disturbing Behavior

Wednesday, April 07, 2010

Hi Mark,

Need some help... was scrolling through my son's phone messages... he left his phone unlocked... I know it's a breach of privacy, but see he has been smoking, not cigarettes, and he and friends arranging between themselves... not sure how to handle it and what to do say. If raise the issue - he will know I've been through his phone. If I ignore - he is getting away with it... am in a quandary.

A.

.....

Hi A.

First of all - it's o.k. to snoop. Tell him you WILL be doing this periodically.

Secondly - you should confront this using either "When You Want Something From Your Kid" – or – "The Six-Step Approach" [strategies outlined in the online version of the eBook].

Thirdly - you should now take possession of the cell phone, that is, he turns it in to you at the end of the day [I'd do this for at least one month, depending on how compliant he is]. If he has locked it before "turn-in" – then he loses all cell privileges until he unlocks it. If he refuses to turn it in – then you call the service provider and cancel the cell plan (at least temporarily).

Note: If you are now going to email me in return to say something like "well, he has to have his cell phone for bla bla bla reason(s)" – then you are choosing to "half-ass" the program, in which case I cannot help you with this issue.

Keep in mind that this will not keep him from smoking [you'll want to refer to the strategies in the eBook that address this]. Also, he will now begin to erase messages. So you won't solve the real problem (i.e., smoking) by issuing consequences over the cell phone. But, he will know that he's being watched, which may help him curb unwanted activity at least somewhat.

Mark

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:58AM (-07:00)



# 15-year-old daughter having sex with a 20-year-old man...

Wednesday, April 07, 2010

Dear Mark,

My youngest daughter just turned 15 today. While having lunch with my older daughter, who is 23 and living outside of our home, she told us that our 15 year-old had confessed to her that she lost her virginity to a 20 year-old man who often goes to a library activity that she attends each Thursday.

Her dad and I have not liked the library situation for a long time, but have continued to allow her to go (with an attempt to monitor her by having 1 of us there most of the time for the 3 hours that she's there) because older kids hang out around there plus there have been fights and other things that we have not liked. The reason we've continued to allow her to go is because she seems to love it so much. She's homeschooled, so she doesn't think she gets enough socialization and has gone out of her way to "fit in" with the other kids/young adults by giving up a lot of the stuff that she used to love, but will do just about anything to go each Thursday.

Obviously, we want her to be happy, but, especially with this latest revelation from our older daughter, it's time for us to take some kind of action. What would you advise about this? Our older daughter swore us to secrecy and I want her to have a friend to talk to (who better than a sister?), but we need to protect her from these older kids who are bad influences. This guy that she was with before contacted her on Facebook today, saying he wants her back.

She has violent mood swings, which makes her difficult to deal with and I want to handle things properly so that she doesn't hurt herself or run away or anything. This girl is so smart and so capable and has so much potential and we love her dearly. My older daughter offered to take her to Planned Parenthood for birth control pills, but that certainly doesn't take care of diseases or our other concerns plus I'm not sure how I could pretend that I didn't know about the birth control if she leaves it out like she does just about everything else. How should I react in such a situation or should I take her myself? She's already talked about taking the pills for clearing her complexion, so what would be better?

Thank you so much, Mark. I'm so glad that I have you to turn to.

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This is a very serious matter. Unfortunately (or fortunately, as the case may be), you absolutely need to confront her on this. Some "swearing to secrecy" cases have to come out into the light – and this is definitely one.

1. Get her started on birth control.
2. She should be grounded FROM the library.
3. Advise her of the consequences in the event she is found at the library or near the 20-year-old man.

4. Also, you should attempt to find the name of the man who has had sex with your daughter and call the police to report it.
5. Lastly, when the dust has settled, have "the conversation" with her re: sex as follows:

Sometime, when things are calm and everyone is getting along, have a conversation about sex with your daughter. Start with asking her what she may already know. Appropriate body language, facial expressions and responses are a must here. You want her to open up about a very private subject and feel safe talking about it. Body gestures of placing your hand over your heart or gaping mouth are not helpful. Keep your eye brows down to avoid the bug-eyed expression; it is natural to hear the staccato beat of your heart in your ears at this moment. Use responses like: "okay", "yes, that's true", "no, that is not true", "that is a common misconception." Avoid responses like: "a body can do that?", "for how long?", "let me grab a pen." You have to stay in control of the conversation.

After hearing what knowledge your daughter has, be sure to correct any false information she may have learned on the internet, at school or the local teen hang-out. Put off the mental list of security systems, chastity belts, teenage boy detection systems, and swat surveillance for later. Move on to the psychological aspect of sex and intimacy. Sex should not be taken lightly like choosing which bowling alley to go to on Friday night, no matter what the single neighbor next door does. Sex is mental as well as physical. Let her know that the scared, confused and embarrassing feelings that she has are normal and she should be feeling this way for a long, long, long time to come. This is after all a preparation talk about the future, distant future. If she is not afraid, modify the mental list and operation "Parent Watch" is a go.

Peer pressure is an issue for all teens. It is okay to be teased for being a virgin, let her know it is a way of breaking down her defenses and making her do something she is not prepared to do. Be vigilant about getting names without being too obvious, swat needs to update their system regularly. Being labeled Most Likely to "Remain a Virgin through High School" is an honor. Warn about relationship pressures she will face. It is natural to feel "in love" as a teenager, but that is not a precursor for sex. Feed the image of how he will look twenty years down the road with a pot belly, bald, drinking and flatulence problem. This could be the new form of birth control. Posters on the wall of every Planned Parenthood center of Brad Pitt and Joe, the out of work plumber.

Discuss the worst urban legends to reassure her that they are in fact, urban legends. Holding hands and kissing will get you pregnant. Nope, that just passes cooties. Men suffer violent and painful deaths from a sudden shift in blood flow to their "closest best friend." We women have collectively proven this urban legend false for centuries; marriage still exists. Men are diagnosed with terminal illness due to a lack of sex. You know, there was hope for this one. There is a lot of good information under divorce statistics to prove this one false.

Every discussion has to include consequences for unprotected sex. Having a baby at a young age or the desire to have one is a rising concern in our society. Guiding and explaining the trials and tribulations of parenthood can fall on deaf ears here, so be resourceful. We are so lucky to be living in a technologically advanced era. Imagine how many couples are video taping the birth of their children. I'm sure there are proud parents out there willing to share in their experiences. The local library (go with her to the library) also has resources on conception to birth with all the misery and weight gain in between to draw upon for visual aids. Try not to lay this on too thickly, eventually you do

want grandchildren.

Unfortunately there is also the consequence of sexually transmitted disease in our society. This is not an easy discussion for any parent to have with a teenager. Thank goodness the American Medical Association has issued pamphlets on various diseases for questions and concerns. Hotline numbers are located on each one for additional reinforcements. These pamphlets can be found in almost every clinic and doctors office. Take as many as you need to decorate your daughter's room. There is no such thing as being over informed.

And finally, remember to stress that you are always there to answer any questions she may have, and not to worry too much. Now, good luck, and don't forget that mental list.

Mark

### **My Out-of-Control Daughter**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:41AM (-07:00)

## **Texting Teens and Sleep Deprivation**

**Wednesday, April 07, 2010**

**My teenage son is not getting up on time for school due to being up most of the night texting his g-friend. Any advice?**

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Getting children and teenagers away from the cell phone is quite a battle for moms and dads. Most (yes, I said "most") teenagers suffer from sleep deprivation solely because of late night text messaging. Most teens go to sleep with their phone plugged-in right by their heads. Every ping of an incoming message is a temptation to pick up the phone.

According to a recent online survey by Online Parent Support, nearly a quarter of adolescents in a relationship have communicated with a boyfriend or girlfriend hourly between midnight and 5 a.m. via cell phone or texting. One in six communicated 10 or more times an hour through the night.

Most children go to sleep with their phone plugged in right by their heads. Every ping of an incoming message is a temptation to pick up the phone. They know talking on the phone might wake up their moms and dads, but if they text, it probably won't.

Adolescents are famously sleep-deprived already, but experts say some are compounding the problem by staying up into the middle of the night to silently type messages to friends on their mobile phones. Adolescents need on average 9 hours sleep per night, but often only manage 7.5 hours. This leaves them with a sleep debt resulting in poor performance, moodiness and irritability.

With changing biorhythms, adolescents do naturally stay up later -- but not that late. In addition to needing more sleep, adolescents experience a "phase shift" during puberty, falling asleep later at night than do younger children. The brain's circadian timing system - controlled mainly by melatonin--switches on later at night as pubertal development progresses. Later on, in middle-age, the clock appears to shift back, making it hard for

moms and dads to stay awake just when their adolescents are at their most alert.

Like surfing the Internet or watching TV, text- messaging tends to energize adolescents rather than help them fall asleep .Nearly a quarter of adolescents in a relationship have communicated with a boyfriend or girlfriend hourly between midnight and 5 a.m. via mobile phone or texting. It is during these hours that new brain cells and neural connections or "wires" which connect the right and left sides of the brain and are critical to intelligence, self-awareness and performance, grow like branches on a tree. Daytime stimulation, in the form of school and social interaction, gets "hard-wired" into the adolescent brain during the latter stages of sleep, including REM sleep.

Cut these sleep stages short and performance suffers the next day. If you want to learn really well and to be really efficient in your learning, the best way to do it is to get a good night's sleep. Get the mobile phones and TV's out of their rooms, turn off the computer and encourage some light reading in bed before going to sleep.

#### **What to do with too much texting—**

1. Check the bill for late night calls - if they have broken the agreement about not using the phone once they are in bed then the consequence should be to confiscate it for a day or two.
2. Enlist other moms and dads - Polite society used to frown on phone calls after 9 p.m. Network with other moms and dads of adolescents to agree on community standards.
3. Keep phones out of bedrooms. Make an agreement that the phone stays on a charger in the kitchen or away from the bedrooms.
4. Stop rescuing - if you're still getting your children up in the morning, give up that job. It's time they took on that responsibility and managed the consequences of being late if they don't get up in time. Moms and dads should be clear that a parental ride or excuse note is not an option. We moms and dads need to stop protecting children from the natural results of their actions.
5. Turn it off. Switch it off half an hour before bedtime. Putting it on silent is not good enough.

#### **Your action steps—**

- Sit down with the teens in your family and create an agreement around responsible mobile phone use.
- Hold them accountable to the agreement you jointly make.
- Make the consequence (if they break the agreement) a logical, related consequence.
- Confiscate the phone for a day or two (not a month!).
- Restate the terms of the agreement.

#### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:02AM (-07:00)

## **Teens and Prescription Pills**

**Friday, April 09, 2010**

Alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use among adolescents may have declined over the past decade, but at least one abuse risk is on the rise: the prescription pill bottle. That's because more children are using painkillers, drugs for ADHA (attention-

deficit/hyperactivity disorder), antidepressants, and tranquilizers and sleep aids to get high.

One in five adolescents in grades 7 to 12 intentionally abused prescription drugs, according to a Partnership for a Drug-Free America study. Children assume pharmaceuticals are safe because they're medicine. But prescription drugs can be just as addictive and deadly as street drugs and are easier to obtain.

The top three ways teenagers report getting pills are through parents' and friends' medicine cabinets, someone else's medications and online sites that don't require a doctor's prescription.

Signs of abuse include extreme changes in behavior and a dramatic decline in grades.

So be sure to limit access to medicines by disposing of drugs you're not using, keeping prescriptions out of easily accessible areas, and monitoring the Web sites your adolescent visits.

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 08:16AM (-07:00)

## **Temper Dysregulation Disorder: Bad Temper, or Mental Illness?**

**Friday, April 30, 2010**

### **Temper Tantrums Pushed as a New Disorder Called "Temper Dysregulation Disorder"**

Severe outbursts grossly out of proportion to the situation, in the form of verbal rages or physical aggression, several times a week -- to moms and dads, these would seem the most common elements of childhood temper tantrums. They are also the proposed criteria for a new childhood mental disorder called Temper Dysregulation Disorder (TDD) with Dysphoria.

TDD is being recommended for inclusion in the next edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, or DSM, a massive catalogue of brain dysfunction now undergoing its first major revision in 16 years. It is considered the psychiatrists' bible of mental disorders. If accepted, TDD could soon become as entrenched in our vernacular as ADD.

TDD is being proposed as an alternative to the runaway diagnosis of childhood bipolar disorder. The number of kids being diagnosed with -- and medicated for -- bipolar disorder has shot up dramatically in the past decade, despite concerns that many don't meet the official criteria, but are getting the lifelong label nonetheless because of their explosive temper outbursts. The idea behind TDD is to create a less-severe diagnostic "home" for these kids.

The fear is that TDD could open the door to the diagnosis of any youngster with a bad temper, that it risks pathologizing a normal part of a youngster's development and could lead to wider prescribing of antipsychotics, antidepressants and mood stabilizers to kids, including preschoolers barely out of training pants.

It's an extremely significant move, and it's a very alarming. Infants and kids have meltdowns, regularly and routinely. It's a healthy expression of frustration. It's a very serious move to contemplate that as a bona fide mental illness, which is what they're very seriously proposing.

The over-diagnosis of bipolar has been a colossal embarrassment to the field. So they've tried to come up with another diagnosis that will somehow let you diagnose unruly kids. But maybe they're unruly, full stop.... To give them a psychiatric diagnosis and treat them with antipsychotics is insane.

But the research director for the task force writing the new edition of the DSM says the following:

"TDD isn't run-of-the mill temper tantrums. We're not talking about the temper tantrum of a two-year-old or a three-year-old who's not getting his way. We're talking about kids of age six or above who kind of have a hair-trigger, and really quite violent temper tantrums totally out of proportion to any kind of provocation that might have brought them on. Something out of the norm of what you would call a normal temper tantrum. And these are the kids who were receiving a diagnosis of bipolar disorder."

Here are the proposed criteria for TDD:

A. The disorder is characterized by severe recurrent temper outbursts in response to common stressors.

1. The temper outbursts are manifest verbally and/or behaviorally, such as in the form of verbal rages, or physical aggression towards people or property.
2. The reaction is grossly out of proportion in intensity or duration to the situation or provocation.
3. The responses are inconsistent with developmental level.

B. Frequency: The temper outbursts occur, on average, three or more times per week.

C. Mood between temper outbursts:

1. Nearly every day, the mood between temper outbursts is persistently negative (irritable, angry, and/or sad).
2. The negative mood is observable by others (e.g., parents, teachers, peers).

D. Duration: Criteria A-C have been present for at least 12 months. Throughout that time, the person has never been without the symptoms of Criteria A-C for more than 3 months at a time.

E. The temper outbursts and/or negative mood are present in at least two settings (at home, at school, or with peers) and must be severe in at least in one setting.

F. Chronological age is at least 6 years (or equivalent developmental level).

G. The onset is before age 10 years.

H. In the past year, there has never been a distinct period lasting more than one day during which abnormally elevated or expansive mood was present most of the day for most days, and the abnormally elevated or expansive mood was accompanied by the

onset, or worsening, of three of the “B” criteria of mania (i.e., grandiosity or inflated self esteem, decreased need for sleep, pressured speech, flight of ideas, distractibility, increase in goal directed activity, or excessive involvement in activities with a high potential for painful consequences). Abnormally elevated mood should be differentiated from developmentally appropriate mood elevation, such as occurs in the context of a highly positive event or its anticipation.

I. The behaviors do not occur exclusively during the course of a Psychotic or Mood Disorder (e.g., Major Depressive Disorder, Dysthymic Disorder, Bipolar Disorder) and are not better accounted for by another mental disorder (e.g., Pervasive Developmental Disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, separation anxiety disorder). (Note: This diagnosis can co-exist with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, ADHD, Conduct Disorder, and Substance Use Disorders.) The symptoms are not due to the direct physiological effects of a drug of abuse, or to a general medical or neurological condition.

The syndrome captured by section A-C (frequent and intense temper outbursts, happening several times per week in the context of negative emotionality) is the core of the symptoms that has been incorrectly interpreted as indicative of childhood bipolar disorder. Section H is very interesting. It states that this diagnosis is not appropriate if the person has experienced classic mania (e.g., abnormally elevated or expansive mood), as in such a case the diagnosis of bipolar is likely more accurate.

Why did the DSM-V decide that this syndrome is not simply bipolar disorder of childhood?

1. Lack of continuity to bipolar. If TDD is simply the expression of bipolar disorder during childhood, then children diagnosed with this condition would eventually develop symptoms of classic bipolar disorder as they reach adulthood. The data do not support this hypothesis. That is, children who display the TDD syndrome in childhood (and are often incorrectly diagnosed as bipolar) are not more likely to develop classic bipolar disorder later in life as their peer. Instead, these children are more likely to develop depression, not bipolar!

2. Different Biological Markers. Youth who are diagnosed with classic bipolar differ significantly from those who have a TDD-like syndrome. If TDD is simply bipolar, then the biomarkers of TDD should be similar to those of bipolar, but this is not the case.

3. Different Demographic Factors. If TDD is simply bipolar, then the gender distribution of TDD should be similar to that of bipolar. This does not appear to be the case. Specifically, there is no gender differences in the rate of classic bipolar; male and females are equally likely to develop the condition. However, the TDD-like syndrome is disproportionately observed in boys rather than girls.

4. A need for a new category that would impact treatment and research. In theory, the presence of TDD will educate clinicians, researchers, and the public that this syndrome is not simply a version of bipolar disorder. This would facilitate research on the causes, features, and treatments for this condition. This has major implications for treatment. For example, the standard treatment for bipolar disorder does NOT seem to work in children that have the TDD syndrome. By explicitly stating that TDD is not bipolar, researchers would be less likely to approach the search for treatments from a “bipolar framework”, which would potentially facilitate the discovery of more effective interventions.

Of course there is no way to predict what practical effects creating the TDD category might have. Even if they are successful at changing the label that clinicians use, it could be that the children all get the same medications as before. But the difference is going to be that they won't have to take the medicine for the rest of their life.

TDD is a new term, but its characteristics are not new to research. In scientific papers, the disorder is referred to as "severe mood dysregulation" (SMD).

### Online Parent Support

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 11:03AM (-07:00)

## Children and Head Banging

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

**My son hits his head so hard and so often he has dark bruises on his forehead. He does this when he is frustrated, angry and anxious. What can I do to help him? He has told me he knows it's wrong but just can't stop. Please help me to help my son.**

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Kids who are emotionally and physically healthy, as well as kids with developmental or sensory issues, may head bang. It is thought that head banging is a self-soothing process that kids partake in, much like thumb sucking or an attachment to a blanket or toy. Kids that bang their heads have at some point found the rocking or rhythmic sensations calming, and an aid to sleep. Alternatively, some kids appear to bang their heads in an attempt to stimulate themselves or to bring pleasure. However, head banging may occur in combination with temper tantrums. While this may appear as if the youngster is trying to hurt himself or herself, it is usually the youngster's way of trying to relieve stress.

Young people who are under-stimulated (those who are blind, deaf, bored, or lonely) head bang for stimulation. Kids who are over stimulated (in an overwhelming environment) find the rhythmic movements of head banging soothing.

Head banging may be a symptom of autism, tourette syndrome and seizure disorders.

You should take your youngster to the pediatrician immediately if he or she is engaging in head banging for a long period of time and seems unaware of their surroundings. If head banging is the only way a youngster can be soothed, or if they are unresponsive to attempts by you to interact with them, you should seek out medical attention.

Kids who bang their heads excessively and cause themselves harm may have a developmental disability. These kids may have to take medication or wear a helmet to protect themselves from injury.

Older kids who bang their heads may need the attention of a psychologist. A psychologist can help the youngster find the source of their stress and teach them ways to cope.

Medical attention is usually not necessary in regards to head banging. However, you should make sure your youngster's pediatrician is aware of the behavior. Unless the head



banging is excessive or causing bumps or bruising, most pediatricians will advise parents to leave the youngster alone and to not interfere with head banging. Most kids outgrow this behavior in a few months.

Typically, healthy children don't seriously injure themselves while banging their head. Pain prevents them from banging too hard. Also, kids under 3 don't generate enough force to cause brain damage or neurological problems. The front or front/side of the head is the most frequently struck. A child's head is built to take all of the minor head trauma that is a normal part of learning to walk and climb. Healthy infants, toddlers and older children who are head-bangers usually grow up to be coordinated and completely normal kids.

### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:01AM (-07:00)

## **Younger Girls Dating Older Boys**

**Wednesday, May 12, 2010**

Parents often worry about their daughters having an older boyfriend. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control, it turns out they have good reason to be worried.

Kayla is 14. Her boyfriend is 18.

Kayla says, "I have to admit, because I am dating an older guy, you know, I am very more open to alcohol, just because, I can ask him, 'Hey can you go to the store and buy me something?'"

Kayla says another risk of dating an older guy might be getting pressured into having sex. She says, "I think a lot of guys especially in high school will go for younger girls just because they'll give it up, you know. They are willing to experiment, they are easier."

New research shows one in four girls who've had sex -- say their first time was with a guy at least three years older.

Kayla says, "When guys are older, girls will trust them: 'Oh, he knows what he's talking about. He has more experience.'"

The research shows -- with an older boy -- girls are less likely to use a condom -- and more likely to get pregnant than other sexually active teens.

So frequently the younger girl is naïve. Sometimes she doesn't have the assertiveness to stand up for herself and demand that a condom be used.

Studies also show, on average -- girls who lost their virginity to an older boy -- ended up having more sexual partners than girls whose first time was with someone their own age.

They frequently will start feeling like damaged goods, or that they are down a road sexually that they weren't ready to go down, but there's no going back. So they will frequently then go onto another relationship with an older guy.

Parents can set ground rules -- for example -- teens can only date someone who is one

grade level above them.

You want to have your children talking to you about who they are interested in, who they think is cute, and who they kind of have their eyes on. You can usually, if you are having a communication that's good with your child, you get those clues a long time before they come home and say they have a boyfriend who's 18.

Research also shows ten percent of sexually active boys lose their virginity to a girl at least three years older -- and that they, too, face damaging effects to their health.

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 12:22PM (-07:00)

## How do you motivate your teenager to look for a job?

Thursday, May 13, 2010

My question is how do you motivate your teenager to look for a job?

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The first thing you can do to motivate your teenager to find a job is to help him with some of the initial steps. This includes creating a resume, discussing how to dress when going on an interview, and talking to him about how to respond while in an interview. Do a mock interview with your teenager and make suggestions on what he needs to improve.

Read the resume and check for grammatical errors, typos and accuracy of the information. Note that the resume reads well and that it is laid out consistently throughout. A good resume is paramount in procuring employment. You should also help him draft a cover letter if he does not already have one.

It is important for your teenager to understand that he cannot dress the same way he dresses when hanging out with friends. He should dress professionally, neat and clean. Being well groomed is also important when teaching your teenager how to find a job. Encourage your teenager to wear a standard black pair of pants and a white shirt when he finally gets a job interview.

In today's economy, your teenager will have to be aggressive in his job search. On his first job search outing, accompany your teenager. Introduce yourself and your teenager. After the introduction, let your teenager talk and leave a copy of his resume. Instruct your teenager to ask for an interview.

Don't assume that your teen knows the right way to go about finding a job. Ask him questions to understand his thinking and his approach to finding a job. Based on what he says, coach him on effective techniques to finding a job. (After coaching my son on how to find a job, he received a job interview after the first "how to find a job" session. Prior to that, he had been trying to find a job for over four months and was getting very discouraged and to the point of giving up.)

So, to motivate your teen to look for work, help him "get off the ground" with the initial

steps that lead to landing the job, namely:

1. Help prepare resume
2. Practice the interview process
3. Take your teenager out the first time
4. Show him how to dress for success
5. Teach him to be aggressive in his job search

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:42PM (-07:00)

## Runaway Daughter

Friday, May 14, 2010

Mark,

I'm the one that wrote you about my daughter running away. She is still missing and we keep hearing various chatter rumors from school that she is with this person or that person. Today I heard that she is with the original person she was with, which I've heard is dangerous! I also heard that they're in downtown Reno jumping from hotel to hotel to not be detected. The police are not looking for her since she is a runaway – so they're no help. I have to get all the leads and report them to the detective. I'm also working with the school police, which are also not much help! We've made posters and posted them everywhere, but in this one area, they are being taken down. I don't know if this is the lifestyle she wants or if she's being exploited.

Her twin sister is very agitated everyday and wants to know if her sister is okay, but does not want her to come home because she says she's such a bitch.

Mark, I know you can't do much from where you are at but I'm desperate for some kind of support...I'm going crazy with worry and the unknown.

Thank you

D.

.....

Hi D.,

Several important points here:

1. She is enjoying that fact that you are worried to death (a control issue for her; once again the "tail is wagging the dog").
2. She is probably somewhat safe (for the most part, although you will probably disagree).
3. She is (ironically) developing "self-reliance," which oddly enough is the whole goal of this program.
4. She WILL want to return home eventually (that's pretty much a guarantee, although again you may disagree). And when she does, let her know up front that she will have to

abide by very specific house rules (draft up a contract and have her sign-off).  
5. As long as you are doing your good detective work (be sure to refer to the eBook on how this is done), then your only other assignment is to stop taking ownership of your daughter's choices.

Here's something that will be very strange for you to understand:

When you "let go" of this situation (i.e., trust that this is actually all a good thing that will work out for the best in the long run), the universe will step-in and begin to assist. The more you worry and try to control the situation, the more you will push her away. The more you let go and trust that something good is in the works, the more you will attract her. It sounds like you've done your part - the rest is now up to your daughter.

(I told you this would be a weird concept - but trust me on this one.)

Mark

**Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:44AM (-07:00)

## Dealing with Violent Children

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

Hi Mark

Thanks so much for the parenting material, it has given my wife and I some positive direction in parenting our oppositional 10-year-old boy. He ticks nearly all the boxes for ODD and in addition to working your program, we are endeavoring to have him see a child psychologist. However he is reluctant to go and when he does go he pretends everything is okay, insisting that he can control himself. The reason I am writing to you is that he has become increasingly violent, particularly towards my wife, often punching and kicking her with force. Should I be physically restraining him? This seems to increase his violence and up the level of his tantrum. I'm trying to stay poker-faced but still feel I need to do something to protect my wife and our children. I have taken our boy to the police after a recent violent episode, mainly for scare tactics, but they seemed quite bemused by the fact I would bring him. I'm also wondering if there is some medical issue below the surface here, but it is extremely difficult to get him to co-operate to go anywhere for assessment.

Regards,

G.

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Hi G.,

*Re: restraining.*

WORLD operates. And in the real world, physical violence results in being “arrested” (in the fullest sense of the term). It would be best, however, to prevent these violent episodes to begin with. It’s much easier to deal with small fires rather than blazing infernos.

*Re: testing.*

Have him examined by a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist. Ask for a “comprehensive psychiatric evaluation.” You want to rule out any biological issues (e.g., brain damage).

Assuming the violence is behaviorally-based rather than some medical condition, here are a few items to consider...

Although the roots of child violence are varied, violent children often share a pattern of beliefs and feelings that support their aggressive behavior. In some cases, it is relatively easy to punish the behavior, but it can be much more difficult to change the underlying thoughts and emotions of a violent youngster. To be effective, treatment approaches for violent children need to take these factors into account:

1. A 'me against the world' attitude. Kids who become violent have often learned to see the world as a cold and hostile place. They develop a habit of thought that attributes hostile intentions to others. This attitude leaves them little choice but to fight virtually all the time. If, for example, another youngster bumps up against them in the hallway at school, they immediately take offense, certain that they were attacked. They cannot imagine that perhaps the bumping was just clumsiness on the other youngster's part or an attempt to tease that really wasn't hostile.
2. Always the victim. Even while they are the aggressors, violent children almost always think of themselves as victims--of unfair parents, teachers, of other bullies, of prejudice--and believe that their violent acts are therefore totally justified.
3. Distorted thinking. Violent kids come to believe that overpowering another person is a mark of strength and worth, and that violence is a legitimate way to resolve conflict. Popular media support this idea, with wrestlers who pound their opponents without mercy and so-called action heroes who slaughter foes by the truckload. For good or bad, the government unwittingly encourages the idea that "might makes right" when it engages in shows of strength celebrating the Army and police. Violent kids needn't look far for evidence that force is what really counts.
4. Never safe. The aggressive youngster sees the world as an unsafe place in which there are only victims and victimizers, so he (unconsciously) chooses to be one of the latter. The power and delight he takes in hurting others, in combination with his already numbed emotions, can make for a lethal mixture.
5. Self-esteem. For some kids, aggression toward others may be a powerful source of self-esteem, particularly if they lack other confirmation of their human worth. In many cases, the problem is not lack of self-esteem in general – but lack of self-esteem related to positive, peaceful accomplishments.
6. The loss of empathy. Violent kids often don't even recognize (much less feel) the suffering of others. Empathy develops early in infancy. Most nine-month-old infants register concern if they see their parents crying, for example. Kids who have been

emotionally traumatized learn to protect themselves from further emotional damage by shutting off their own feelings along with any empathic feelings they might have for others.

It isn't difficult to recognize many of these beliefs and emotions in kids who act violently, but it is hard to know how to correct them. While it is clear to others that many of the ideas the violent youngster harbors are wrong and that the scope of his feelings is narrowed, from the inside, these thoughts and feelings make perfect sense. Every experience the youngster has seems to reinforce the idea that the world is an unfair place.

### ***So what can you do?***

Here's some advice on dealing with violent kids:

- Acknowledge your role. When one youngster - or the "target child" - is acting out, the family will blame him or her for the family's dysfunction. Oftentimes, you will see a family that will present a disruptive youngster for treatment ... this is the sacrificial lamb for the family's toxicity. I advise moms and dads to examine their own behavior, and if need be, the entire family should seek counseling.
- Don't get into a power struggle with a youngster. Sometimes aggressive kids know that if they struggle long enough with their moms and dads, by yelling, screaming, or throwing temper tantrums. Be firm in disciplining your youngster and let him know that there boundaries that he have to observe.
- Every youngster has currency. Use it! There's not a youngster born that doesn't have currency, whether it's toys, clothes, games, or television. Access to this "currency" needs to be contingent upon proper behavior. For example, if a youngster throws a temper tantrum, he should not be rewarded with a toy or an activity. He needs to understand the consequences of his behavior. Predict the consequences of his actions with 100 percent accuracy.
- Maintain a unified front. Sometimes aggressive kids know that if they engage in "divide and conquer" tactics with their moms and dads, they will be able to get their way. Be unified in your parenting. If you're together, if you're unified and if you're there for each other, then all of a sudden there's strength in numbers. Don't forget to close the ranks.
- Obtain a proper diagnosis from a psychologist. Many times, moms and dads are quick to make evaluations of their kid's unruly behavior, such as blaming aggressiveness on ADHD or ODD. Revisit your evaluations, because a youngster's violence may be stemming from other issues. Don't make judgments until you get to the root of the problem.
- Stop being intimidated by your youngster. Many moms and dads are afraid to discipline an unruly youngster for fear that their youngster will resent them for being an authority figure. Your youngster doesn't have to like you or even love you, but he does have to respect the parent-child relationship, and realize that there will be consequences for negative actions. Recognize that you don't have to be your youngster's friend, but you do have to be his parent.

Good Luck,

Mark

**My Out-of-Control Child**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:27AM (-07:00)

## 17 year old has some issues with authority...

Monday, May 31, 2010

My 17 year old has some issues with authority and is considered selfish. If he does good in school he should be able to spend the night out (both Fri/Sat). The group he hangs with is a little older and has parents that allow their house to be the local hangout (stays up till 3-5). I plan to sit down tonight with a list of consequences - no car 1 week, no phone 2 weeks, no allowance, etc., and am considering an intervention using some friends and family. What can you suggest?

~~~~~

A lot of 17-year-olds think they're grown up enough to set their own rules and to do such things as stay out all night. When you talk with him, emphasize that while his friends may have parents who think it's okay for them to stay out all night, that's not true in your family. In your family, you take your duties as parents seriously, and you believe it is your obligation to know where your child is, what he is doing, and that he is going to be safe in the house by a certain time (whatever your rule is about a curfew). You can tell him that that is the way you see it. If he continues to violate this rule, there will be more consequences. When he decides he is old enough to live on his own, then, of course, he can make any rules for his own life that he chooses. (I'm not necessarily in favor of an intervention for something like this).

Mark

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:41AM (-07:00)

## There is no way of taking away this privilege without a physical co...

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Hi Mark,

We are into week 2 of what is supposed to have been a 3 day grounding with my 16 year old. He is still skipping school regularly and although he is generally pleasant enough when he is home, he is non-compliant with his grounding. We have taken away his cell phone, i-pod, computer time and tv. He just simply goes out whenever he wants and stays out as late as he wants to. The only thing that he currently does as a privilege is when he gets home he takes food to his room to eat. He is 6'3" and there is no way of taking away this privilege without a physical conflict, so we don't know what else to do except to try and wait out his defiance until he complies with grounding. If you have a

specific suggestion in this regard it would be appreciated. It seems to us that the point of your program is to decrease the intensity of the interactions with him, so again, we are searching for ways to reduce this privilege without a physical interaction.

Also, on June 22 he is going to his Dad's for 1 month. If he hasn't complied with his grounding with us before that date, does he go away for a month without his phone and i-pod? If so, when he gets back do we try and start the 3 day grounding again or wait until he makes a mistake?

We certainly appreciate that you are a very busy man, however, we really need some expert personal input from you, beyond what we have seen in the e-book and reference material. We take parenting extremely seriously and have searched again, and again through the material but cannot find answers to our particular questions.

Thank you.

T. & D.

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Hi T.,

The program's main goal is to "foster the development of self-reliance" in your child – not to avoid conflict. Conflict is inevitable. Please continue with sessions #3 and #4.

There is no refusing grounding without serious consequences. If your son leaves, call the police and let them know that you have a runaway. Meanwhile remove every single form of entertainment in his room. Tell him that since he left, he is now on lockdown for twice as long as before. Take his phone, and call all of his friend's parents and let them know that he is grounded, so if he shows up at their house, they should call you immediately.

It sounds like you are afraid of your son. Let him know that if he engages in violence towards you, you WILL call the police and file battery charges.

This is no joke! And these strategies will separate the girls from the women.

I know this is a very tough assignment for you! Can you handle these "tough love" measures? If not, I (unfortunately) may not be able to help you.

Children will still be in charge of the household if parents continue with a passive style of parenting based on fear of the child. Where does that leave the child? It sets him up for failure, because quite honestly, the world will kick his ass if he acts this way later in life. In the real world, you cannot do whatever you want to – and then threaten people when you don't get your way. Is this the message you want to send your son? I doubt it.

No half measures,

Mark

**My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:51AM (-07:00)



# My child is aggressive. How can I prevent this type of behavior?

Friday, June 11, 2010

The best way to prevent aggressive behavior is to give your youngster a stable, secure home life with firm, loving discipline and full-time supervision during the toddler and preschool years. Everyone who cares for your youngster should be a good role model and agree on the rules he's expected to observe as well as the response to use if he disobeys. Whenever he breaks an important rule, he should be reprimanded immediately so that he understands exactly what he's done wrong.

Kids don't know the rules of the house until they're taught them, so that is one of your important parenting responsibilities. Toddlers are normally interested in touching and exploring, so if there are valuables you don't want them to handle, hide or remove them. Consider setting up a separate portion of your home where he can play with books and toys.

For discipline to be most effective, it should take place on an ongoing basis, not just when your youngster misbehaves. In fact, it begins with moms and dads smiling at their smiling baby, and it continues with praise and genuine affection for all positive and appropriate behaviors. Over time, if your youngster feels encouraged and respected, rather than demeaned and embarrassed, he is more likely to listen, learn, and change when necessary. It is always more effective to positively reinforce desired behaviors and to teach kids alternative behaviors rather than just say, "Stop it or else."

While teaching him other ways to respond, there's also nothing wrong with distracting him at times, or trying another approach. As long as you're not "bribing" him to behave differently by offering him sweet snacks, for example, there's nothing wrong with intentionally changing his focus.

Remember, your youngster has little natural self-control. He needs you to teach him not to kick, hit, or bite when he is angry, but instead to express his feelings through words. It's important for him to learn the difference between real and imagined insults and between appropriately standing up for his rights and attacking out of anger. The best way to teach these lessons is to supervise your youngster carefully when he's involved in disputes with his playmates. As long as a disagreement is minor, you can keep your distance and let the kids solve it on their own. However, you must intervene when kids get into a physical fight that continues even after they're told to stop, or when one youngster seems to be in an uncontrollable rage and is assaulting or biting the other. Pull the kids apart and keep them separate until they have calmed down. If the fight is extremely violent, you may have to end the play session. Make it clear that it doesn't matter who "started it." There is no excuse for trying to hurt each other.

To avoid or minimize "high-risk" situations, teach your youngster ways to deal with his anger without resorting to aggressive behavior. Teach him to say "no" in a firm tone of voice, to turn his back, or to find compromises instead of fighting with his body. Through example, teach him that settling differences with words is more effective—and more civilized—than with physical violence. Praise him on his appropriate behavior and help explain to him how "grown-up" he is acting whenever he uses these tactics instead of hitting, kicking, or biting. And always reinforce and praise his behavior when he is

demonstrating kindness and gentleness.

There's also nothing wrong with using a time-out when his behavior is inappropriate, and it can be used in kids as young as one year old. These time-outs should be a last resort, however. Have him sit in a chair or go to a "boring" place where there are no distractions; in essence, you're separating him from his misbehavior, and giving him time to cool off. Briefly explain to your youngster what you're doing and why—but no long lectures. Initially, when kids are young, time-out is over as soon as they have calmed down and are "quiet and still." Ending time-out once they are quiet and still reinforces this behavior, so your youngster learns that time out means "quiet and still." Once they have learned to calm themselves (to be quiet and still), a good rule of thumb is one minute of a timeout for each year in your youngster's age—thus, a three-year-old should have a three-minute time-out. When the time-out is over, there needs to be a time-in, while giving him plenty of positive attention when doing the right thing.

Always watch your own behavior around your youngster. One of the best ways to teach him appropriate behavior is to control your own temper. If you express your anger in quiet, peaceful ways, he probably will follow your example. If you must discipline him, do not feel guilty about it and certainly don't apologize. If he senses your mixed feelings, he may convince himself that he was in the right all along and you are the "bad" one. Although disciplining your youngster is never pleasant, it is a necessary part of parenthood, and there is no reason to feel guilty about it. Your youngster needs to understand when he is in the wrong so that he will take responsibility for his actions and be willing to accept the consequences.

#### **When to seek medical help—**

If your youngster seems to be unusually aggressive for longer than a few weeks, and you cannot cope with his behavior on your own, consult your doctor. Other warning signs include:

- Attacks on you or other adults
- Being sent home or barred from play by neighbors or school
- Physical injury to himself or others (teeth marks, bruises, head injuries)
- Your own fear for the safety of those around him

The most important warning sign is the frequency of outbursts. Sometimes kids with conduct disorders will go for several days or a week or two without incident, and may even act quite charming during this time, but few can go an entire month without getting into trouble at least once.

Your doctor can suggest ways to discipline your youngster and will help you determine if he has a true conduct disorder. If this is the problem, you probably will not be able to resolve it on your own, and your doctor will advise appropriate mental health intervention.

The doctor or other mental health specialist will interview both you and your youngster and may observe your youngster in different situations (home, preschool, with adults and other kids). A behavior-management program will be outlined. Not all methods work on all kids, so there will be a certain amount of trial and reassessment.

Once several effective ways are found to reward good behavior and discourage bad, they can be used in establishing an approach that works both at home and away. The

progress may be slow, but such programs usually are successful if started when the disorder is just beginning to develop.

**My Out-of-Control Child**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 05:50AM (-07:00)

## How can I get her to get up in the mornings...

Saturday, June 12, 2010

Hi Mark,

I continue to have struggles with my 17 year old. She has not gone to school for this past semester as she was supposed to be taking her classes by correspondence. Unless I stood over and watched her do the courses, she wouldn't do them. I wasn't about to do that as she needs to learn to be responsible. So, needless to say, she is now behind 3 classes in order to graduate next year. She is going to register for regular school for September as this other method does not work for her. She is not motivated at all.

My one big problem with her is that she will not get out of bed in the morning. She has a part-time job that she is supposed to be at 3 days a week. She maybe goes to it 2 times a week if lucky because she just won't get out of bed. She calls in sick so she can sleep in. She will end up losing this job soon. I know she will be exactly the same way once school starts again. She refuses to get out of bed. Then when she does, she thinks she can just go out and hang out with her boyfriend in the evening. Even if we say no, she will leave and go anyways. I am so upset and frustrated by all of this as it has me so stressed out all the time. I dread mornings as I know the hassles we will have. I know that there are "natural consequences" of her actions and she has to be the one that has to live them but we are all living them. Plus, I don't want her to be a high school drop-out and still living at home once she turns 18.

How can I get her to get up in the mornings and to understand that she needs to be more responsible and motivated or she will get nowhere in life?

Thanks,

P.

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Adolescents are notorious for staying up late at night and being hard to awaken in the morning. Your adolescent is probably no exception, but it's not necessarily because he or she is lazy or contrary. This behavior pattern actually has a physical cause — and there are ways to help mesh your adolescent's sleep schedule with that of the rest of the world.

Everyone has an internal clock that influences body temperature, sleep cycles, appetite and hormonal changes. The biological and psychological processes that follow the cycle of this 24-hour internal clock are called circadian rhythms. Before adolescence, these circadian rhythms direct most children to naturally fall asleep around 8 or 9 p.m. But puberty changes an adolescent's internal clock, delaying the time he or she starts feeling sleepy — often until 11 p.m. or later. Staying up late to study or socialize can disrupt an teen's internal clock even more.

Most adolescents need about nine hours of sleep a night — and sometimes more — to maintain optimal daytime alertness. But few adolescents actually get that much sleep regularly, thanks to part-time jobs, homework, extracurricular activities, social demands and early-morning classes. More than 90 percent of adolescents in a recent study reported sleeping less than the recommended nine hours a night. In the same study, 10 percent of adolescents reported sleeping less than six hours a night.

Big deal? Yes. Irritability aside, sleep deprivation can have serious consequences. Daytime sleepiness makes it difficult to concentrate and learn, or even stay awake in class. Too little sleep may contribute to mood swings and behavioral problems. And sleepy adolescents who get behind the wheel may cause serious — even deadly — accidents.

Catching up on sleep during the weekends seems like a logical solution to adolescent sleep problems, but it doesn't help much. In fact, sleeping in can confuse your adolescent's internal clock even more. A forced early bedtime may backfire, too. If your adolescent goes to bed too early, he or she may only lie awake for hours.

So what can you do? Don't assume that your adolescent is at the mercy of his or her internal clock. Take action tonight!

- Stick to a schedule. Tough as it may be, encourage your adolescent to go to bed and get up at the same time every day — even on weekends. Prioritize extracurricular activities and curb late-night social time as needed. If your adolescent has a job, limit working hours to no more than 16 to 20 hours a week.
- Nix long naps. If your adolescent is drowsy during the day, a 30-minute nap after school may be refreshing. But too much daytime shut-eye may only make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- Keep it calm. Encourage your adolescent to wind down at night with a warm shower, a book or other relaxing activities — and avoid vigorous exercise, loud music, video games, text messaging, Web surfing and other stimulating activities shortly before bedtime. Take the TV out of your adolescent's room, or keep it off at night. The same goes for your adolescent's cell phone and computer.
- Curb the caffeine. A jolt of caffeine may help your adolescent stay awake during class, but the effects are fleeting. And too much caffeine can interfere with a good night's sleep.
- Adjust the lighting. As bedtime approaches, dim the lights. Turn the lights off during sleep. In the morning, expose your adolescent to bright light. These simple cues can help signal when it's time to sleep and when it's time to wake up.

Sleeping pills and other medications generally aren't recommended for adolescents.

### **Online Parent Support**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 09:15AM (-07:00)

# Home Drug-Testing Your Teenager

Thursday, June 17, 2010

Home drug-testing kits sold on the Internet may not be the best way to determine if a teen is or is not using drugs because it is not easy for moms and dads to know which test to choose, how to collect a urine or hair sample for testing, or understand the limits of test results.

Moms and dads who are anxious to know whether their kids are using drugs have easy access to kits sold on the Internet. But home drug testing is not consistent with the guidelines of professional medical organizations.

Moms and dads using these kits may be reassured by a "false negative," or mistakenly accuse their youngster of using drugs because of a "false positive".

I recommend that moms and dads who suspect that their youngster is using drugs seek a professional assessment rather than conduct a drug test at home. I want to caution moms and dads about the limitations and potential risks of home drug-testing products. Testing for drug use at home, with or without the consent of the teen, can also seriously undermine the parent-youngster relationship.

Moms and dads who are concerned that their youngster is using drugs may not know exactly which drug the youngster is using, and using the wrong test may delay the correct diagnosis of a serious substance abuse disorder. There are several types of tests for alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines and other drugs common among teens.

Laboratory testing for drugs of abuse is a technically challenging procedure, even for medical professionals, and tests performed at home by untrained moms and dads might have higher rates of error than professional tests. I have cited one study in which a certified laboratory had false negative tests between 6-40 percent, depending on the drug detected.

False positives are also a problem as in the case of amphetamines, especially if the youngster is using high doses of caffeine or cold medications containing pseudoephedrine or theophylline. Similarly, poppy seeds contained in bagels and other foods may result in a false positive for morphine.

Collecting a urine or hair sample is not an easy task for a parent. The standard protocol for collecting urine samples requires "observation" to avoid adulteration or dilution with water, and teenagers are quite adept at beating the tests. In addition, teens can purchase products from the Internet that "clean" urine by interfering with standard drug tests.

But observing the collection of a urine sample would not be acceptable to most families and is not advisable. The Web sites we reviewed did not address these issues, nor did they offer any details about how to collect a hair sample.

Coerced home drug testing by moms and dads may be perceived by teens as invasive and a violation of their rights, potentially damaging the parent-youngster relationship. Only one of the eight Web sites viewed gave clear advice on testing a youngster against his or her will.

Many of the claims of benefits of home drug testing made by the Web sites are "unsubstantiated." Seven of the eight sites claimed that random drug testing prevented drug use by reducing peer pressure, but I can't find any studies to substantiate that claim.

Here are five ways that adolescents may try to cheat drug tests. They're all described elsewhere on the Internet, so moms and dads should be aware of them:

1. **Popping vitamins.** Perhaps it's because niacin (aka vitamin B3) is known to aid metabolism, or perhaps it's because Scientologists are said to take it in excess to flush their bodies of toxins. Whatever the reasons, some adolescents got the idea that extreme doses of this vitamin would erase any trace of their illicit drug use. Instead, it almost cost them their lives. In two separate incidents, emergency physician Manoj Mittal of Kids's Hospital of Philadelphia has found adolescents who downed at least 150 times the daily recommended dose of niacin (15 mg) to cheat drug tests. Both kids were vomiting, had low blood sugar, and had "significant" liver toxicity when they arrived at the ER. And the niacin didn't even do what they'd intended; both tested positive for illicit drugs. People might think that since [niacin] is a vitamin it's harmless. But these cases suggest that our bodies have limits.

2. **Swapping urine samples.** Whether they use a friend's clean urine, synthetic pee, or even freeze-dried urine purchased online, some adolescents try to pass off foreign samples as their own. The biggest tip-off is temperature. Anything significantly lower than body temperature is suspicious, which is why some have tried to shuttle samples in armpits or taped to thighs to keep them warm. Possibly the oddest trick of all is a device marketed to those trying to beat witnessed drug collections: a sort of prosthetic penis called the "Whizzinator" that claims to come equipped with clean urine "guaranteed" to remain at body temperature for hours, with the help of special heat pads. Believe it or not, [the prosthesis] comes in different colors.

3. **Switching drugs.** Perhaps most alarming is that adolescents bent on defeating drug tests will sometimes switch their drug of choice to an undetectable (or harder to detect) substance that's considerably more hazardous. Inhalants, for example, include numerous types of chemical vapors that typically produce brief, intoxicating effects. You don't excrete [inhalants] in your urine, but inhaling is acutely more dangerous than marijuana. Indeed, inhalants can trigger the lethal heart problem known as sudden sniffing death in otherwise healthy adolescents, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

4. **Tampering.** A sprinkle of salt or a splash of bleach, vinegar, detergent, or drain cleaner is all that's needed to muck up a urine specimen. These and other household substances are all too often smuggled into the bathroom and used to alter the composition of urine, making the presence of some illegal substances undetectable. Same goes for chemical concoctions sold all over the Internet. Sometimes these additives or "adulterants" will cloud or discolor urine, easily casting suspicion on the specimen, but others leave the sample looking normal. Laboratory toxicologists employ simple tests to catch these cheats. For example, a few drops of hydrogen peroxide will turn urine brown if it's been mixed with pyridinium chlorochromate, an otherwise-imperceptible chemical designed to foil drug tests.

5. **Water-loading.** Gulping fluids before providing urine, a long-standing tactic, is still the most common way that adolescents try to beat tests. Whether cheats use salty solutions to induce thirst, flushing agents that increase urine output, or just plain old H<sub>2</sub>O, their aim is to water down drugs so they can't be detected. Some testing facilities may check urine

for dilution and deem overly watery samples "unfit for testing." But consuming too much fluid too quickly can occasionally have dire consequences.

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 10:03AM (-07:00)

## **Teen Girls and Promiscuity**

**Monday, June 21, 2010**

***My daughter tells me she wants to have sex – with anyone. She doesn't have a boyfriend, but she is actively looking for sexual encounters and is becoming more promiscuous by the day. Help!!!***

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Girls with low self esteem are more likely to have sex at a young age. 50% of girls interviewed said they had sex by the time in they were in 9th grade some even earlier. The good stat is that 75% of girls of aged 9 say they like the way they look. That number drastically goes down to 56% by the age of 12 and 13. By the age of nine, 50% of girls say they have been on a diet or are on a diet. Do you know that 7 million girls and women have an eating disorder and that 20% of women are bulimic in America? 33% of girls age 9-12 think they are overweight and that 60% of those same girls are on a diet. 57% of girls are fasting, on a diet or are smoking in order to lose weight. What is the result? Well, 50%-70% of girls with normal weight think they are overweight. They are also many other statistics on girls and teenagers who are suffering of low self esteem using drugs and alcohol.

What kind of help is there for overcoming low self esteem? The number one thing we can do is to make sure they know we love them and we provide them with affection. If they know we love them, then they will trust us and will be more likely to talk to us when a difficult situation in their like arise. As part of raising your children, you must instill 2 traits in your children.

First, make sure your children have people skills. People skills are not thought in school. They make sure your children know how to count, read and write. Look around you, may be your friends, people at work, who appear to be more successful in their life. Successful can be at work or their marriage. Is it Joe, in the corner who does not talk to anyone or Mary who can start a conversation with anyone at anytime. Is Brandi at work who always eats alone or Frank who is always helping and praising others? The answer is always the more outgoing person who is friendly and nice to everyone. By the way, when I say outgoing, I don't mean the person next to you at work that just can't shut up. I mean the person that can have conversation with anyone, that person.

The second item is character. Help your daughter build character. Make her make the hard choices. Don't let her get away with the occasional lying or unacceptable behavior. Make her understand in a positive way that there are consequences for not behaving correctly in today's society and they will result in some sort of negative ways for her. Hold her accountable just like you think the society will hold her accountable so she is ready when she becomes an adult.

I would like to tell you it is easy, but the reality is that if it was easy, they would not be 7

million girls out there suffering of low self esteem. Overcoming your girl teenager low self esteem is a very serious concern that all parents should have. Look for the low self esteem signs and address it.

The following ten are some of the most prevalent signs of low self-esteem:

1. You use negative, hopeless language. Low self-esteem seeps in to one's daily language. Examples of negative, hopeless, low self-esteem language include phrases like: "It figures", or "If something bad is going to happen, it will happen to me", or "I'm only human", or "I can't...", or "I never could...", or "I should have...", or "Life sucks and then you die", etc...
2. You take things personally. The lower your self-esteem, the more you will feel unsure of yourself. The more unsure you feel about yourself, the more apt you will be to take what other people say personally. Raise your self-esteem and other people's opinions and comments will roll off of you like water off of a duck's back.
3. You get frustrated, impatient, or angry often. When you do not feel good about yourself, you tend to have very little patience with others. This lack of patience and understanding for others creates a breeding ground for many possible negative responses including frustration, anger, incredulousness, and being harshly judgmental.
4. You don't make and/or sustain direct eye contact with others. Someone who shifts his eyes about and/or is unable to make direct eye contact is communicating low self-esteem, as well as communicating an intention to avoid connecting with others.
5. You do not take risks. Some people respond to low self-esteem by avoiding taking risks in their personal and professional lives. If you feel unsure about yourself, you may fear failure and worry about looking bad, to the point that you play it safe. Give up fearing failure and looking bad. You are going to die anyhow. You might as well give life its fair shake and go for your soul's desires! Remember self-esteem problems show up differently in different people. You may feel great about yourself in one area of your life, but have extremely low self-esteem in another area of your life. There is always room for improvement. Isn't it time you became committed to truly loving and appreciating yourself?
6. You do not engage with others. Your lack of belief in yourself may motivate you to choose to hide away from reality or cloister yourself away from other living, breathing humans. Take a very deep breath and join the land of the living. You have a lot to give - to yourself and to others.
7. You do not accept compliments well. "Oh no, not me". Responding to a compliment with a statement of denial is another sign of low self-esteem. When you feel really good about yourself, you accept praise with appreciation and grace.
8. You are depressed. Chronic, pervasive, and extended bouts of low self-esteem are often precursors to depression. If you are battling with depression you are probably having trouble seeing the positive in any situation. If you are experiencing prolonged periods of extreme sadness, hopelessness, and/or sabotaging thoughts, consult a professional.
9. You apologize and feel guilty. If you say the words "I'm sorry" often, then you are apologizing for living. Apologizing a lot usually goes hand in hand with feeling guilty. Guilt is a major low self-esteem growth hormone. The guiltier you feel, the worse you feel about yourself, and the worse you feel about yourself, the guiltier you feel. Stop apologizing and give up feeling guilty today!
10. Walking with your head down. If you've ever seen someone walking with his head pointed downwards, with his chin scraping the front of his body, then you have witnessed low self-esteem. If you do this, pick your chin up off of your chest and walk with your head held high!



Good luck,

Mark

### **My Out-of-Control Daughter**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 06:05PM (-07:00)

## **My child will not get out of bed for either school or work...**

**Tuesday, June 22, 2010**

***What is done in a case where my child will not get out of bed for either school or work without a huge fight everyday?***

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Adolescents are notorious for staying up late at night and being hard to awaken in the morning. Your adolescent is probably no exception, but it's not necessarily because she is lazy or contrary. This behavior pattern actually has a physical cause — and there are ways to help mesh your adolescent's sleep schedule with that of the rest of the world.

Everyone has an internal clock that influences body temperature, sleep cycles, appetite and hormonal changes. The biological and psychological processes that follow the cycle of this 24-hour internal clock are called circadian rhythms. Before adolescence, these circadian rhythms direct most kids to naturally fall asleep around 8 or 9 p.m. But puberty changes an adolescent's internal clock, delaying the time he or she starts feeling sleepy — often until 11 p.m. or later. Staying up late to study or socialize can disrupt an adolescent's internal clock even more.

Most adolescents need about nine hours of sleep a night — and sometimes more — to maintain optimal daytime alertness. But few adolescents actually get that much sleep regularly, thanks to part-time jobs, homework, extracurricular activities, social demands and early-morning classes. More than 90 percent of adolescents in a recent study reported sleeping less than the recommended nine hours a night. In the same study, 10 percent of adolescents reported sleeping less than six hours a night.

Irritability aside, sleep deprivation can have serious consequences. Daytime sleepiness makes it difficult to concentrate and learn, or even stay awake in class. Too little sleep may contribute to mood swings and behavioral problems. And sleepy adolescents who get behind the wheel may cause serious — even deadly — accidents.

Catching up on sleep during the weekends seems like a logical solution to adolescent sleep problems, but it doesn't help much. In fact, sleeping in can confuse your adolescent's internal clock even more. A forced early bedtime may backfire, too. If your adolescent goes to bed too early, he or she may only lie awake for hours.

So what can you do? Don't assume that your adolescent is at the mercy of her internal clock. Take action tonight!

- Stick to a schedule. Tough as it may be, encourage your adolescent to go to bed and get up at the same time every day — even on weekends. Prioritize extracurricular activities and curb late-night social time as needed. If your adolescent has a job, limit working hours to no more than 16 to 20 hours a week.
- Nix long naps. If your adolescent is drowsy during the day, a 30-minute nap after school may be refreshing. But too much daytime shut-eye may only make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- Keep it calm. Encourage your adolescent to wind down at night with a warm shower, a book or other relaxing activities — and avoid vigorous exercise, loud music, video games, text messaging, Web surfing and other stimulating activities shortly before bedtime. Take the TV out of your adolescent's room, or keep it off at night. The same goes for your adolescent's cell phone and computer.
- Curb the caffeine. A jolt of caffeine may help your adolescent stay awake during class, but the effects are fleeting. And too much caffeine can interfere with a good night's sleep.
- Adjust the lighting. As bedtime approaches, dim the lights. Turn the lights off during sleep. In the morning, expose your adolescent to bright light. These simple cues can help signal when it's time to sleep and when it's time to wake up.

Sleeping pills and other medications generally aren't recommended for adolescents.

In some cases, excessive daytime sleepiness can be a sign of something more than a problem with your adolescent's internal clock. Other problems can include:

- Depression. Sleeping too much or too little is a common sign of depression.
- Insomnia or biological clock disturbance. If your adolescent has trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, he or she is likely to struggle with daytime sleepiness.
- Medication side effects. Many medications — including over-the-counter cold and allergy medications and prescription medications to treat depression and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder — can affect sleep.
- Narcolepsy. Sudden daytime sleep, usually for only short periods of time, can be a sign of narcolepsy. Narcoleptic episodes can occur at any time — even in the middle of a conversation. Sudden attacks of muscle weakness in response to emotions such as laughter, anger or surprise are possible, too.
- Obstructive sleep apnea. When throat muscles fall slack during sleep, they stop air from moving freely through the nose and windpipe. This can interfere with breathing and disrupt sleep.
- Restless legs syndrome. This condition causes a "creepy" sensation in the legs and an irresistible urge to move the legs, usually shortly after going to bed. The discomfort and movement can interrupt sleep.

Mark

### **My Out-of-Control Teen**

Posted by Online Parent Support, LLC at 07:59AM (-07:00)





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